

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1881.

A Grape from a Thorn.

By JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THRUST AND PARRY.



THE High Garden (as it was called) at Barton, though on an elevated spot as its name implied, was considerably lower than the ground about it; it was like a large circular pond, which, instead of water, contained beds of beautiful flowers. These were arranged in the modern style, in masses of red, white, and blue, and had a charming effect. A terrace ran round the whole, from which walks descended at right angles, and crossed the garden in prim and formal fashion, so that it almost resembled a figure in Euclid. The air, shut in and warmed by the high walls, was heavy with scent, and very still; except for the murmurous hum of bees there was not a sound to be heard; and the flag on the castle tower was the only object from the outside world

that intruded itself. On one of the terraces were two gardeners at work, whom Ella was more pleased to see than she would have liked to have owned to herself; if she had known the place had been so retired, she would certainly not have accepted Mr. Heyton's invitation to explore it; there was something of familiarity in his manner, which she had not at first observed, which annoyed her. "This is our little Paradise," he said, "wherein, not choosing to take our walks abroad, like other people, we take our pleasure, and fancy ourselves monarchs of all we survey."

The reference to his Highness was manifest, but Ella was resolved to ignore all such allusions.

"I don't wonder at such a spot being a favourite with you, or indeed with anybody," was her guarded reply. "I suppose," she added, pointing to the southern corner, where a number of glass-roofed buildings twinkled in the sun, "those are the green-houses."

"What made you think that?" he inquired quickly.

"What else can they be?" she answered with surprise.

"True, it was a very natural supposition. No; they are orchard-houses. I will take you through them."

"Thank you, I had rather not," said Ella, quietly; "I dislike the heat of such places."

She began to entertain a vague apprehension of her companion; his tone was not actually rude, but it fell little short of it. It was the manner of a superior to an inferior; very different, however, from that which his Highness exhibited. If he had been presuming upon their disparity of years, treating her as if she had been a mere child, she could easily have borne it; but the feeling of resentment she experienced was too strong to have arisen from such a cause; she felt a dread she had never felt before, that this man might say something impertinent to her, and she was more than ever thankful for the presence of the gardeners.

"You dislike heat, do you?" he answered; "so do I. The worst of this place is, that it has no shade. That door on the north terrace opens into the pine-wood; on the hottest day it is always cool there."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and what's very curious, if but a very little wind is blowing—as to-day, for instance—the fir-trees make just the same music as the distant murmur of the sea. Should you like to hear it?"

"No; at least not now. I must be going indoors, as my aunt will wonder what has become of me."

"Oh! Miss Burt is your aunt, is she?"

The colour rushed into Ella's face; she felt the blood coursing through all her veins, and also a pang of shame.

This man then had—or would, at all events, imagine he had—caught her out in an act of duplicity. It had not struck her at the moment that the fact of her relationship to Miss Burt had not been disclosed to Mr. Heyton.

"Yes; Miss Burt is my aunt, sir."

"Then your grandmother must have married twice," remarked her companion coolly; "since your mother's name was Vallance."

"You seem to have possessed yourself of a great deal of information about my family," said Ella with a faint smile. She did not know what harm she might have done by the admission she had just been led into; but as a punishment for her own want of caution, as much as to avoid further mischief, she resolved, if possible, that she would have no quarrel with this man.

"Anything that concerns you, Miss Josceline, must naturally be of interest to other people," he said with his outspread hand upon his breast, as though it had been an order. "But in this instance I can hardly claim for myself the knowledge of your ancestry. His Highness himself was my informant. It is the one business of his life to keep himself informed concerning the birth and parentage of every member of the British aristocracy, to which, you know, you belong." And again he chuckled to himself even more significantly than before. Again Ella felt her face flush, and this time with indignation. What, to her sensitive ears, the chuckle seemed to imply, was the incongruity between her station as regarded birth, and her present condition—which was certainly humble enough. And yet something told her that it was no part of her companion's intention to insult her, but rather to remind her (perhaps for her own good, since it could hardly be for his) of her position in their common patron's establishment.

"I sometimes wonder," he went on, with that old touch of cynical humour in his tone, "whether his Highness's solicitude about such matters is merely an abnormal development of a natural devotion to the peerage, or whether it has a more personal origin."

"What do you mean?" inquired Ella; not that she cared what he meant, but because she was anxious to turn the conversation from the discussion of her own affairs.

"Well, you see, his Highness has great hopes; and just as the Pope is said to file a list of all our Church endowments against the day we all become Catholics again, so he keeps account of all the nobility that will one day—perhaps—acknowledge their allegiance to him."

He uttered the word "perhaps" with such a mark of contempt (the garden walls fairly echoed to it) that Ella could not forbear saying, "You do not seem to think very highly of his Highness's claims, Mr. Heyton?"

"His claims? Miss Josceline, you astonish me!" exclaimed the other, with well affected indignation; "when have I said one word that could authorise—I mean, encourage you—to make such an observation. I was alluding—solely—to the unlikelihood of their receiving any public acknowledgment. At present, no one save you and me, who are in his confidence, and about his person, and perhaps half-a-dozen others, are so much as aware of their existence. It is necessary in these days

for one who would attain any kind of eminence to be extensively advertised. If the distinguished personage whom we have in our minds would go about in a coach-and-six, with a French horn (to give the affair a Court-of-Versailles flavour), he would invite perhaps enough of believers to form a party. The other Claimant—I mean the Tichborne—has done it even with a van and drums; but here we live, not indeed ‘a violet by the mossy stone half-hidden from the eye,’ but in solitary state, without so much as a weekly organ to advocate our rights. I wish we had one. By Jingo, I should like to edit it,” grinned the little man. “And I tell you where we have made another omission,” he continued, obviously with great enjoyment of his own humorous conceit: “we ought to belong to the old religion. That is the only genuine article for the last of the Stuarts. Without a father confessor the whole affair is incomplete. We ought to have masses twice a day or so, for the repose of our great-great-grandfather’s soul.”

Under other circumstances Ella might have been unable to restrain a smile at these suggestions; but when she called to mind the relation of the man who made them to the object of his satire, and how the very claims he scoffed at procured his daily bread, she blushed for shame. “Is it possible, Mr. Heyton, that you can thus turn into ridicule pretensions from which you yourself”—she hesitated, then added—“and indeed all of us, derive advantage.”

“Oh, then, you believe in them, do you?” returned he, sharply; “now, that is very satisfactory. I was afraid—that is, I thought it possible—not, of course, that I took you for a sceptic, but that just at first the notion of a new claimant to the throne of England—the last of all the Stuarts—might have been—dear me—a little ——”

It is impossible to reproduce the provoking way in which Mr. Heyton hung and hesitated upon every word, waiting, as it seemed, for her to interpose with some expression of incredulity or doubt.

“I did not say, Mr. Heyton, that I believed in the claims at which you have hinted; I have never said so.”

“Not in words,” he put in quickly; “but surely, at least on one occasion, you have admitted them by tacit consent.”

She knew, of course, that he was referring to her late interview with their common patron, and for the third time the tell-tale colour came into her cheeks. The taunt, if not wholly undeserved, was most disingenuous, and, in the mouth of him who spoke it, in the worst taste.

“You are mistaken, sir,” she said. “His Highness will tell you, if you choose to ask him, that I came here absolutely ignorant of his position, almost of his existence.”

“Just so,” replied the secretary with a sly smile, that contrasted provokingly with the seriousness of his tone. “It is the suddenness of your conversion that makes it, as I have said, so eminently satisfactory. Now your aunt—for she *is* your aunt, it seems—was very incredulous;

it took her, I believe, several days to be convinced that her principle could be reconciled with her interest."

"At all events," said Ella coldly, "neither my aunt nor I could turn into ridicule, as you have done, our common benefactor."

"As *I* have done!" echoed Mr. Heyton, in a tone of amazement. "Did any one (he looked appealingly towards the two gardeners who were, however, well out of earshot) ever hear the like? *I* ridicule our common benefactor? Heaven forbid! Welcome death rather than such dishonour. I may have seemed to make an innocent jest of his Highness's pretensions; but, my dear young lady, has not Coleridge himself (a philosopher one immensely admires) asserted that a man cannot be said to believe in a religion unless he can afford to laugh at it—that is, to see its weak points. Now, in his Highness's claims there are—it must be confessed, in the St. Rosalie part of it, for example—just one or two weak points; though the whole chain of evidence, taken as a whole, is most conclusive and irrefragable."

"Of course, if his Highness is aware not only of the stability of your convictions, Mr. Heyton, but of the means you adopt, after Coleridge, to prove it, that is another matter."

The secretary's beady eyes flashed out a quick, suspicious glance, as though he would have said, "I wonder, now, whether she is in jest or earnest?" Then he answered very slowly and distinctly, "His Highness knows me so well, Miss Josceline, that I am quite sure, if a slanderous tongue should hint anything to the discredit of my fealty, he would treat the accusation with contempt, and also"—here his tone grew even more deliberate—"I, on my part, have some little knowledge of his Highness. If I thought his ear was in danger of being abused by anybody, I should take such steps as would at once and for ever remove that individual from about his person. He, or she—for I should do my duty, even if it were one of the gentler sex—would no longer have to complain of imprisonment in Barton Castle."

"Imprisonment! why imprisonment?" inquired Ella; she felt a certain mischievous pleasure in the alarm she had evidently excited, which caused her to assume an air of indifference. Her companion, on the other hand, as if he had read her thoughts, and regretted the hint of menace with which he had been betrayed, at once adopted the same tone.

"Is it possible you did not know the conditions on which we live here?" he answered lightly. "That the members of his Highness's household are all prisoners on parole? Now, dear me, that is very curious."

"I know nothing about it, Mr. Heyton."

"But surely you must have guessed. How was it, for instance, that ever since you were at Wallington Bay, you never saw your aunt, think you?"

"To be sure, that ought to have struck me," said Ella, looking down,

and stirring the gravel with her foot, but conscious that the secretary's eyes were looking her through and through.

"It is true, there may have been some reason," he continued, "best known to yourself, for that; but in the case of the other tenants of the castle—of myself, for example—I should have thought it would have occurred to you as curious that we remained invisible."

"True; if I had known of your existence it might have done so, no doubt," admitted Ella.

The secretary bit his lip. He felt that this young woman was at least as impervious to coercion as to patronage. "Well, well, at all events, such is the fact," he said, with a touch of peevishness; "it is understood that we do not leave the castle without leave. At the same time, my dear young lady," he added earnestly, "if you should ever wish to exercise that privilege, a word from me to his Highness—Talk of the devil—I mean an angel, and you hear the rustle of his wings. Here he comes, and with those infernal dogs. They always fly at me, and nobody else, as if I were a wild beast."

The remark was evoked by the appearance of his Highness at the garden door, through which, at the same moment, rushed a couple of gigantic deerhounds, who came racing down the gravel walk towards the secretary as though he had been a stag of ten which they had just started. There, however, the parallel ended: the secretary, in the absence of antlers, or even an umbrella, had no intention of showing fight, but was manifestly in a state of extreme perturbation. Ella would, perhaps, have shared his apprehensions on her own account had not Mr. Heyton already complained to her that he alone was the object of the dogs' animosity. As matters were, she was getting seriously alarmed for his personal safety, when suddenly a shrill call was blown from a silver whistle, and "Turk" and Jasper," without checking for an instant their headlong career, swirled round like greyhounds who have turned a hare, and flew back to meet their master, who with slow and stately steps was coming down the walk.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH HIS HIGHNESS.

So soon as the secretary perceived his Highness's intention of coming towards them, he raised his hat, as though they were meeting for the first time that morning—a salutation which the other acknowledged by placing his forefinger on his forehead after the manner of the great Duke of Wellington. In the strong sunlight the calm dignity of his face impressed Ella even more than it had done in his own room; but on this occasion, though he gave her a grave smile, she fancied there was some trace of displeasure in it. Was it possible, she wondered, that he looked upon her presence in his private garden as an intrusion? Some notion

of the same kind seemed to have occurred to Mr. Heyton, since, in rather an apologetic tone, he observed, "I was doing myself the pleasure of acting as cicerone to Miss Josceline about the castle grounds."

"A very efficient one, no doubt," returned the other, without, however, looking towards the secretary; his eyes were fixed on Ella, but with a certain kindly gravity that divested the directness of his gaze of any rudeness. "Have you seen the orchard-houses? Then let me show them you."

He did not wait for any expression of acquiescence, but walked on side by side with her, with the secretary a foot or two behind them, doubtless, as Ella pictured to herself, with a cynical smile, for had she not just admitted to him that the atmosphere of orchard-houses was not to her taste. As for his Highness, however, he could not have shown himself more unconscious of the secretary's presence if "Jasper" or "Turk" had swallowed him, which, to judge by their sniffs and growls about his heels, they had still some hankering to do.

"A predecessor of mine at Barton—Lady Bruce—was delicate, and recommended to try Madeira." His Highness spoke with such deliberation that Ella, thinking she was expected to say something, was on the point of saying that she pitied her ladyship, since Madeira was to her own taste very distasteful, but she fortunately stopped herself in time; it was not the liquor, as it turned out, but the island which had been prescribed. "She shrunk, however, from the sea voyage," continued his Highness; "whereupon her husband said he would bring Madeira for her to England, and so he built her this."

The orchard-house, indeed, was a conservatory of immense length, though neither very broad nor very high, in which an invalid might take a good deal of exercise in a genial atmosphere and among very pleasant surroundings. The air of the place, though far from oppressive in the sense of heat, was heavy with fragrance from every kind of flower, for the term "orchard" applied only to one part of it where "drooped the heavy-fruited trees;" the rest was bright with colour, except where, on the shady or wall side, great clusters of white camellias contrasted with it. It was thence, no doubt, thought Ella, that the flowers had come which she had found upon her father's grave. Her host noticed her glance at them.

"Are you fond of camellias?" he said.

"I think they are the most beautiful of all flowers," she answered; "though, as generally happens with very beautiful people, the soul—fragrance—is wanting to them."

"That is not always the case," answered his Highness with a look of grave admiration that rather disconcerted his companion. "There have been women, such as Flora Macdonald, for example—St. Flora, as we call her at Barton—who have combined the charms of mind and body."

The peculiarity of the phrase, "as we call her at Barton," of course attracted Ella's attention; but she was only partly right in setting it

down to her host's partiality for the House of Stuart; it was also a sort of tentative experiment. It was his custom with Miss Burt and the secretary to speak of himself in royal phrase as "we," and the words "at Barton" were put in to prevent Ella from experiencing, and perhaps expressing, a very natural astonishment.

"Was Flora Macdonald really so very beautiful, sir?"

"You shall see her presently in the picture gallery," he answered, "and judge for yourself. I used to think her," he added, with just sufficient emphasis to give his speech significance, "the most spiritual-looking of all women. I am pleased to find you are so fond of camellias, Miss Josceline; do you know why?"

Ella did not reply. Compliments, however high-flown, and therefore meaningless, were not to her taste, and she already felt a little embarrassed; perhaps he was now going to say "because he could supply her with camellias for her hair."

"Well," he continued, "it is for what you will consider a very sentimental reason." She was more apprehensive of what was coming than ever; but, as it happened, her fears were groundless. His Highness had mounted his hobby. "The reason is, that they were the poor Cardinal's favourite flower."

Ella answered "Indeed!" and threw into the word as much of mournful interest as under the circumstances was possible. She had not the remotest idea to what cardinal he was referring, nor why he should have called him poor. Her impression was that cardinals were pretty well provided for.

"Yes; in my revered relative's time the flower was a comparative novelty; but while he was in a position to do so, his Eminence filled his house with them."

Here her companion sighed, and walked on for some moments in silence. The picture he was doubtless making in his mind of a cardinal who could not afford camellias, appeared to overcome him.

"It is a lovely afternoon," said he presently, with the manner of one who is making an effort—and an unaccustomed one—to please; "the view from the pine-wood will be charming. But perhaps you have had enough of walking, Miss Josceline?"

"I am only afraid, sir, that my aunt, who does not know of my being out, will be alarmed at my absence."

"Did you come here, then," answered her companion, in a cold and, as she thought, a somewhat displeased tone, "at Mr. Heyton's invitation?" The gentleman alluded to was fortunately at some distance, eating peaches.

"I met Mr. Heyton in the park, sir, as I was returning from the churchyard, and——"

"To be sure, to be sure," interrupted the other gently. "He brought you here to divert your thoughts. I hope, Miss Josceline, that you found everything in that sacred spot befitting, and—and—as it should be?"

"I found, sir, that some kind hand—I do not know whose hand—but if it was yours I thank you—had placed——"

"I gave orders to the gardener, yes," put in her companion, waiving away her thanks with a stately gesture. "But, alas! how little it is that we can do for the dead! My ancestors, who were of the old faith, were happier in that respect; those who went before them did not seem so altogether out of reach. Mr. Heyton, you need attend us no longer. I will myself show Miss Josceline over the picture gallery."

The secretary inclined his head, partly in reverence, and partly to conceal the fact that he had half a peach in his mouth; and it was just as well he did so, since it gave him the appearance—by no means contradicted by the cynical expression of his face—of putting his tongue in his cheek. If Ella did not know all the thoughts that were passing through that gentleman's mind, she guessed some of them. She had a suspicion, for one thing, that he was smarting under a sense of humiliation; and though it was not her fault that his self-imposed office of cicerone was taken from him, and it must be confessed in a somewhat cavalier manner, she turned round and gave him a parting bow of thanks. He returned it with studious respect, and for once without that movement of the hand to the heart which was so habitual to him: his master's eye was on him.

"Heyton is a good creature," remarked his Highness, as they left the conservatory, patting "Jasper" on the head as he spoke, as though he would have extended the compliment to that faithful animal.

The authority exercised by her singular host interested Ella exceedingly, and much more than if it had been genuine. His airs of superiority, though she believed them utterly unfounded, did not excite her ridicule. They were evidently the result of an honest fanaticism such as a good Jacobite might have entertained for a real Pretender. His kindness touched her, for it was evident that the manifestation of it cost him something in a supposed loss of dignity. That characteristic touch, "I gave orders to the gardener," when an act of personal respect had been imputed to him, did not annoy her, because she already began to understand him. As they walked homeward together without a word, she even imagined that she recognised the reason of his silence. The reference to his ancestors had turned his thoughts into that well-worn and monopolising channel.

They entered the castle by a private door; not that by which Ella had left it, but one that was used by his Highness only. Leaving the reception-room on the left, he led the way into a high-roofed chamber of no very large dimensions, and which the few portraits on the walls hardly entitled to be called a gallery; so, however, it was termed at Barton, where imposing names made up for a somewhat miniature order of things.

"That is the Cardinal," sighed his Highness, pointing to a picture of an ecclesiastic in scarlet. The face was delicate almost to effeminacy, the mouth weak and indecisive, the eyes gentle, the whole expression amiability personified.

"Is he not every inch a prince of the Church?"

If it were so, the Church was certainly not a Church militant.

"There is a sweet expression in the face," said Ella, not quite knowing what to say of a gentleman obviously as meek as a mouse.

"True; yet his brother writes of Henry Benedict Maria Clement, 'He does not much love to be contradicted.'"

"Indeed!" said Ella, thinking to herself what appropriate names Clement and the feminine Maria were for him.

From a niche in the side of the picture her companion took down a medal. "When my great-grandfather died," he said, "the Cardinal, in ignorance of my grandfather's birth, had this medal struck: '*Henricus Nonus, Anglie Rex*,' on the one side, and '*Dei gratia sed non voluntate hominum*' on the other; an inscription to me, as you may imagine, inexpressibly touching. I have always pitied him from the bottom of my heart, although (unconsciously) he did me great damage."

"You mean by having the medal struck?" hesitated Ella. She was evidently expected to say something, which sorely perplexed her; for was it right, she asked herself, to encourage her companion in his hallucinations by exhibiting an interest in such a matter, even though she really felt it? On the other hand, she remembered that her aunt had said it was not possible for any human being to shake her host's confidence in his own pretensions, or to augment it.

"Why, yes; the medal, of course, was a material wrong, since it ignored my grandfather's existence. Then at his death his bequest of the crown jewels, including even the George of the Royal Martyr, to George the Fourth, was an indefensible act, since they were not his to dispose of, but his nephew's. As I have said, however, I have nothing but commiseration for him; he had a generous heart. He gave his ruby—the largest and most perfect in Europe—to help the Pope to defray the exactions of Napoleon; yet the French stripped him of all that he had. Infirm and destitute, this last-but-one descendant of a long line of kings was constrained to become a pensioner upon his rival's bounty. He had 4,000*l.* a year from George the Third until his death; scarcely enough, poor fellow!" concluded his Highness, with a grave smile, "to keep him in camellias. There, that's St. Flora," he continued in a lighter tone, and pointing to the portrait of a young girl not beautiful, and of short stature, but with an expression of face that curiously combined determination with tenderness. "There is our patron saint, taken from the life."

"She was not a Catholic herself, I think?" observed Ella, regarding the portrait with intentness and an interest she was compelled to feel in spite of herself.

"Upon my word, I don't know," answered her companion frankly. "I do not remember to have heard it mentioned. The Prince himself was not much concerned on such points."

Perhaps nothing was more convincing and illustrative of his High-

ness's confidence in his own pretensions, than this cold-blooded reply, which embodied in a sentence all the Stuart selfishness and want of feeling. A kind-hearted man himself, he seemed positively to stoop to emulate their egotism, in order that the doctrine of heredity might gain a new example. As if sensible, however, that his words had made a bad impression on his companion, he produced a note-case, and taking reverently from it a slip of paper, kissed it with every mark of affection and respect. "This is the famous letter," he said, "of Flora's step-father, recommending her mother to take Betty Burke into her service. You remember who Betty Burke was?"

Unhappily Ella did not remember. His Highness looked at her as a bishop might regard a young woman come to him for confirmation who showed an ignorance of the Commandments. "Read it," he said, imperiously.

"I have sent your daughter from this country, least (the spelling was peculiar) she should be any way frightened by the troops lying here. She has got one Betty Burke, an Irish girl, who, as she tells me, is a good spinster. If her spinning pleases you, you may keep her till she spins all her lint; or, if you have any more to spin, you may employ her. I have sent Neil Makechan along with your daughter and Betty Burke, to take care of them. I am your dutiful husband,

"HUGH MACDONALD."

"Well, now you know who Betty Burke was?"

"Yes, said Ella, patiently; "she was, of course, the Pre——" (her good star just saved her from saying the Pretender)—"Prince Charlie, in disguise. I remember it all now, even to Flora's 'farewell.'"

"Can you sing 'the Farewell'?" inquired his Highness, eagerly. "Oh, pray do!"

"Well, really, without accompaniment, I doubt it," hesitated Ella. As it happened, Scotch songs were her forte; but the situation, even for a practised singer, was embarrassing.

"You have the letter in your hand," he said, "which should be an inspiration. Come."

Far over yon hills of the heather so green,
And down by the corrie that sings to the sea,
The bonny young Flora sat singing her lane;
The dew on her plaid and the tear in her e'e.
She looked at a boat with the breezes that swung
Away on the wave like a bird on the main;
And aye as it lessened she sighed and she sung,
Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again,
Farewell to my hero, the gallant and young,
Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again.

Ella sang well, and with feeling; the room was well suited to her voice, and the pictures that hung about it imparted a curious sense of association and appropriateness. Her companion listened with rapt

attention, keeping time to the tune with a slight movement of his fingers. When she had finished, she perceived with astonishment and some alarm that the tears were stealing down his cheeks. He brushed them away deliberately enough with his hand. "Miss Josceline," he said earnestly, "you have laid me under a great obligation. It is the habit of our race to be easily moved, but I have rarely exhibited such weakness."

He turned to the next picture as if to change the subject: it showed a beautiful woman, very young, but with a certain proud disdain in her face. "That is my great-grandmother, the Princess Louisa of Stolberg. You remember Alfieri's lines upon her:—

Her mouth no rosebud, and no rose her cheek,
May emulate in freshness, fragrance, hue;
A voice so soft and sweet, to hear her speak
Inspires delight and pleasures ever new.

It was a most unhappy marriage."

Ella did not know how unhappy it had been, and what had followed upon it, but fortunately made no inquiry; the subject was evidently a painful one to her companion.

"I see one picture with its face to the wall," said she; "what is the reason of that?"

Her companion approached the picture and turned it, disclosing a full-length portrait of a man richly dressed and of distinguished appearance. "That is the Judas of the Stuarts," he said; "the Prince's secretary; not Mr. Heyton, you know," he added, smiling, "but John Murray of Broughton. Do you remember, when Sir John Douglas was brought before the Privy Council and confronted with him, what he said? 'Do you know this witness?' they inquired. 'Not I,' he answered. 'I once knew a person called Murray of Broughton, but that was a gentleman and man of honour.'"

"I remember him now," said Ella, "and what Lockhart tells of him. How he used to consult Walter Scott's father by night, and thereby excited Mrs. Scott's curiosity; and how she once offered him a cup of coffee which her husband threw out of window after he had used it, saying, 'Neither lips of me nor mine come after Mr. Murray of Broughton.'"

"A noble speech," remarked his Highness, "and a noble mind," he added, with grave admiration, "that treasures such a speech in its memory. I cannot but look upon it, Miss Josceline, as a happy chance that led you to accept the hospitality of Barton." Then, perceiving that the compliment, or rather the earnestness with which it was spoken, embarrassed her, he added more lightly, "The rest of the pictures we will examine another day at our leisure, Miss Josceline; I am afraid your aunt may be alarmed at your absence."

It was not without some sense of relief that Ella found herself in her own room. The manner of the last of the Stuarts, though perfectly

respectful, had, towards the close of the interview, certainly become *empressé*. She would have been still more struck with his attentions if she had noticed the fact, or rather been aware of its significance, that when she left the picture gallery he had so far forgotten his exalted position as to open the door for her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MONEY EARNED.

ONE of the many advantages which conventional persons possess over those who are more natural, or less easily schooled, is that they are almost always satisfied with their own conduct. The groove of respectability and outward seeming in which they move is so deep that they hardly ever "run off the rails." Their sorrow and their mirth are both of a superficial kind; but, such as they are, they are at their own disposal, and they can "laugh with those that laugh," and "weep with those that weep" without difficulty or an effort. Propriety and the sense of decorum always keep their hold on them; they never laugh when they ought to weep, or *vice versa*, for their self-consciousness reminds them of times and seasons and of the fitness of things. With the poor creatures of impulse it is different; they allow themselves to give way to natural emotion without due consideration of the circumstances, and repent at leisure of the unbecoming weaknesses into which haste and want of reflection have betrayed them.

This was the case with Ella Josceline, when, in the solitude of her room, she reviewed the events of the day and her own conduct; she had within the space of a few hours allowed herself to be vexed, interested, and then vexed again, with the behaviour of strangers. She had found herself speculating upon their devices, their private affairs, their intentions, with a certain amount of interest in them; and yet it was only one short week since she had lost her father and found the first record of her dead mother! The very thought that it was really the best thing for her that she should, as far as possible, forget the past and concern herself with the present and the future, only aggravated her remorse. She accused herself of being not only unfeeling, but selfish and self-seeking; and shed such bitter tears as the ordinary miserable sinner—unless with the object of mitigating his sentence—would hardly drop for a murder done. So occupied was she with these penitential thoughts that she did not notice her aunt's entrance into the room with a letter in her hand.

"My darling, I am sorry to see you thus," she said tenderly, but also with a certain touch of reproach. "I had hoped you were too sensible as well as too good——"

"Good!" cried Ella passionately; "I am not good, but bad, and selfish, and wicked."

"That is sad news, indeed," returned Aunt Esther quietly; "for if you are all that, my dear, what must the rest of the world be?"

It is very seldom that any one has the courage to use this argument of comparison; but as a moral styptic, applied to those who are neither fools nor knaves, it is invaluable. It is one of the few instances in which comparisons are not only not odious, but eminently useful. An individual endowed with spiritual pride would have gone on pretending that she was the basest of mortals; but Ella was neither a hypocrite nor a self-deceiver, and at once perceived that she had been indulging in morbid self-depreciation.

"At all events," she replied, wiping her eyes, "I am very much ashamed of myself, and have good cause to be;" and, without waiting for her aunt to cross-examine her, she told her why—that is to say, the whole story of what had taken place that afternoon in connection both with the secretary and his Highness.

Aunt Esther listened to it, and especially to the latter portion of it, with the greatest interest and attention.

"I don't see what you have to reproach yourself with, my dear," she said, "in having behaved with courtesy and naturalness. For whatever reason the death of those we love is permitted to happen, it cannot be in order to unfit us for the duties of life. Otherwise your father would have been spared to you—I mean," she added hastily, "if he had lived there would have been no such need for you to concern yourself in material matters, with things and people about you, as now exists. Providence itself, as it seems to me, has called you into a new and active sphere of existence; and it is not only 'no use,' but an act of insubordination and defiance, to fight against it. You are the best judge, Ella, of what your father would have wished; but, as for your dear mother, I am sure she would have been grieved to know you spend your time in vain regrets."

If Aunt Esther, instead of being one of the simplest and most straightforward of mortals, had been one of the most artful and diplomatic, she could not have urged a more powerful argument than these words conveyed. For if she could thus answer for Ella's mother, Ella herself had certainly no doubt of the view her father would have taken on the matter in question.

"But it seems so soon," she faintly urged, "to interest oneself in worldly matters."

"That is because, my dear," returned her companion smiling, "you have been brought up such a fine lady. I have suffered in my time, believe me; but the luxury of grief—the unctuous satisfaction of shutting oneself up and indulging in it without regard for one's fellow-creatures—has been denied me. I have always had to work for myself, and therefore, indirectly, for *them*; and I am inclined to think that is what we are sent into the world to do. 'Let the dead bury their dead,' depend upon it, was said not only for the benefit of those who happened to hear it,

but for future generations. This moral lecture (as sometimes happens)," she added in a lighter tone, "has caused me, by the bye, to forget what may be of importance. Here is a letter for you, my dear; and likewise something by the book post."

"For me?" Ella took up the letter with no great interest, for the address was strange to her, but without the weariness which she would have manifested a few minutes ago. Aunt Esther's words had done her good. The letter she had brought her seemed also to do her good, to judge by the light that kindled in her eyes as she perused it.

"Dear Miss Josceline,—I venture to forward you a letter with enclosure, which Vernon has received from Messrs. Pater and Son, the publishers of the *Mayfair Keepsake*. He himself shrinks from doing this; but, as I tell him, I cannot but think you would be gratified at the receipt of such a communication. The labourer, as we were wont to agree, you know, is worthy of his hire. As to the wood blocks of which mention is made, they can be procured at Bearward's in the Strand; and if you mention my name, and what they are wanted for, a letter from you will receive from them immediate attention and some good advice. I fear, however, you will want a teacher at your elbow just at first. Your departure has been the signal for flight for most of the company at the *Ultramarine*—not including, however, Mr. Aird and Davey. I have only to add that if Vernon or myself can be of the least use to you with Messrs. Pater, or in any other matter, it will give us the greatest pleasure. Yours faithfully,

"MICHAEL FELSPAR."

The accompanying letter ran as follows:—

"Dear Mr. Vernon,—We think the 'Italian Boy' a charming little picture, and that it weds with your poem most appropriately. Since the artist is unknown, she will, no doubt, be glad of work on reasonable terms. We enclose a cheque for a couple of guineas for what she has done for us, and should like to hear from her with regard to future illustrations. It is a great pity she does not draw on the wood, which would save both her and us the middleman's expenses.

"Yours very truly,

"PATER AND SON."

In her surprise, and also because she felt she should have no secrets from her kind relative, Ella read both letters aloud.

"What does it mean? What does it all mean?" inquired Aunt Esther. "Why do Messrs. Pater and Son send you two guineas?"

"Oh! because of *this*," replied Ella modestly, and exhibiting the copy of the *Keepsake* which had arrived with the letters; "in payment for this little picture which I did for them in illustration of Mr. Vernon's poem."

"You did that? *You?*" exclaimed Aunt Esther admiringly. "What

a clever creature you must be, darling! Why, it's as like as life; and the organ too."

"You mean the boy is as like a real boy as the hurdy-gurdy is like an organ," said Ella laughing. "However, I hope to improve in time, and I am sure these gentlemen have paid me very handsomely."

"What! you call two guineas handsome for such a picture? I should have said twenty or thirty would have been a fair price," protested Aunt Esther. "However, I suppose Mr. Felspar knows what he is about, and will not let you be imposed upon. So far as he is concerned, the letter is most satisfactory, I'm sure."

"It is most satisfactory every way, Aunt Esther," answered Ella, looking at the cheque in her hand as a connoisseur regards a picture.

The light in which it looked best, we may be sure, was as a pledge and foretaste of independence. Next to the first kiss of love, is the delight of the first money which one makes by one's own exertions. It is not only the reward of labour and the promise of subsistence, but the assurance that we have found our place in the world, or, at all events, the road to it. It is almost the only pure delight, save that of assisting others, which gold can confer.

Up to that date there were few human beings into whose minds the idea of money-getting had less intruded than into Ella Josceline's. All calculations for her material future had hitherto been made for her by another; but now—now that she was alone in the world and bereft of means, and a responsibility (to say the least of it) to her only relative (who was herself, too, in a position of dependence)—that cheque from Messrs. Pater and Son was as the first leaf in the Book of Hope. To a man of business it would have seemed like folly indeed (though if he had a heart it would have been pitiful enough) to see the little multiplication sums (I say multiplication, for, having been educated at a fashionable seminary, she had never been taught the rule of three) which on the instant forefigured itself as on a lecture-board, or let us say, a pure white ivory tablet, on Ella's mind. If a picture which had taken her half a day produced two guineas, how much a year would she make by drawing every "lawful day"? She knew nothing of the laws of supply and demand, but she was not so simple as not to allow something for contingencies; yet, with every drawback, what a competence awaited her! An income not only sufficient for herself, but which should provide a home, with all its comforts, for Aunt Esther.

Breaking into this golden dream—which did not, however, entirely monopolise her thoughts—came the matter-of-fact tones of her aunt. "But if the verses you illustrated were Mr. Vernon's, my dear, how is it that Mr. Felspar writes to you, and not Mr. Vernon?"

This had been the very question which Ella had been putting to herself all the time, and which had even mixed itself up with the product of her multiplication sum. She answered, however, pretty readily, that the reason given by Mr. Felspar for his friend's not

writing was no doubt the correct one; namely, that Mr. Vernon felt a delicacy in intruding mere material matters upon her while her sorrow was so green and tender.

"Then Mr. Felspar the painter, I suppose," observed Aunt Esther, "is a more common sense and practical man than Mr. Vernon the poet?"

The question in its simplicity and directness was characteristic enough of the speaker, yet it seemed to affect her companion with some surprise and even annoyance.

"I don't know why you should say that, Aunt Esther," she replied quickly. "Mr. Felspar was so good as to give me a lesson or two in drawing, and that no doubt entitles him to offer advice on the matter in question; but Mr. Vernon first suggested the picture itself."

"At all events," said Aunt Esther slyly, "I see that it is the poet who is the favourite. Nay, you must not pout, my darling: the tongues of 'faithful retainers,' and especially of housekeepers, you know, are always privileged. Now I shall leave you to digest your correspondence for a little, since I am sure there will be food enough for thought in it."

Aunt Esther was right there, and that Parthian shaft she had let fly at a venture, "I see that it is the poet who is the favourite," had also food for thought in it. Whether Ella was right or not to think of matters of this world, it certainly caused her to do so. The presumption is, she was wrong, and was ashamed of herself, or why should she have been one blush from brow to chin?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A RESOLUTION.

So very much disturbed had Ella been by her aunt's parting observations that it escaped her notice that that lady had taken away the *Mayfair Keepsake* with her—a sign of perturbation of mind with her indeed. For what young author, or artist, does not love to pore over his first production in print or paper; not the mere proof-sheet (though *that* is Heaven) which is, as it were, one's idea in its dressing gown, but stitched and hot-pressed with its cover on, the garb in which it invites the public to the book-stall? Neglecting, I say, the disappearance of this sixpenny-worth of rapture, Ella sat, with Mr. Felspar's letter before her, reading about Mr. Vernon's "shrinking from" intruding upon her. Aunt Esther's query why had not Mr. Vernon written instead of Mr. Felspar? was indeed a very pertinent one. The letter from the publishers had been addressed to Mr. Vernon, not to him; and yet it was Mr. Felspar who had forwarded it, and Mr. Felspar who had written. Perhaps Mr. Vernon's arm was still useless from the snake-bite. Her eyes wandered to the floor

where lay the wrapper in which the magazine had come, and with a sudden impulse she picked it up and read the address on it. Then she folded the crumpled paper neatly up and placed it in her bosom. If she should never possess any other record of the writer than that (except the memory of him), that at least would be something; her own name written in his own hand. She had a presentiment (and it made her heart ache) that that was all she ever would have. Since he could pen a direction, he could have penned a letter. Physical inability had not, it was clear, been the cause of his having written by deputy. What, then, *was* the cause? That it was not that assigned by Mr. Felspar was certain. Why should Mr. Vernon have feared to intrude on her recent sorrow any more than his friend? He must have known as well as Mr. Felspar—since her prospects (or rather her want of them) were known to both of them—that the forwarding of Messrs. Pater's communication, so far from being an intrusion, would be a source of inexpressible encouragement and comfort to her.

It was with a certain sinking of the heart, such as happens to poor humanity only in seasons of extreme depression or despair, that Ella recalled a conversation with her father, that had taken place on the very day when he was taken ill, upon the subject of Mr. Vernon. He had spoken of him, not unfavourably, but with a marked disinclination to encourage any intimacy, and especially with her. He had called him "an estimable young man in his station in life;" as though there had been some social gulf between them; "a Bohemian" and "not the sort of man I should wish a son of mine—and far less a daughter—to be familiar with." And then, again, had not her father sent from his deathbed to Mr. Vernon and been closeted with him alone?—she knew not why, unless it had some reference to that unhappy scheme respecting Mr. Aird. It was terrible to think it, but Ella's impression was that on that occasion her father might have even told Mr. Vernon that she was engaged to Mr. Aird, or at all events might have purposely so offended Mr. Vernon's pride that it was impossible he could continue, or resume, their old terms of friendship. That he wished her well, she knew; but it was more than possible that he would never again hold speech with her. She even fancied there had been something of farewell in the sad and sympathetic look he wore, as she had driven by the door of Clover Cottage that morning.

A maiden (of the well-regulated type) does not own her love, she had heard, even to herself, unless the object of her affections had declared himself; and yet the bitter tears welled through her fingers as she sat with her face covered with her hands and thought upon these things. At the lowest, she felt she had been deprived of a friend at a time when she stood so sorely in need of friends, and, above all, of such as could sympathise with her. In Mr. Vernon she had found for the first time, if not "a man after her own heart," a man whose views (if in her undeveloped mental condition she could be said to have views) were in

unison with her own, and whose calling was in harmony with her aspirations. Whether he was "Bohemian" or not, she could not tell; the word had no exact meaning for her; but if to be independent, through one's own exertions, of the accidents of birth and fortune, and to be careless of the opinion of the world, and to be content with a little, was to be Bohemian—then she herself was gipsy to the backbone.

In Paris she had seen something of society; had been introduced (with a purpose, no doubt, of which at the time, thank Heaven, she had known nothing) to young gentlemen of fashion, the well-born and the well-to-do—all, more or less, of her father's class, though vastly inferior to him in address and wit—and they had not impressed her favourably. It had struck her, even then, that they were wanting in genuineness and good feeling; but since she had become acquainted with Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon, she had felt sure of this. In character, in views, in conduct, these two young men seemed the very opposites of those with whom she had hitherto mingled. In them she had first met with real gentleness and delicacy, and the refinement which springs from kindness of heart and surpasses all that French polish can bestow. It was with honest, frank, and genuine people (even though like Mrs. Wallace, or Dr. Cooper, they might be wanting in certain artificial attributes of manner and culture) that her sympathies would have led her to attach herself in any case; but now, deprived of the "position" on which her father had laid such stress, and dependent on her own exertions, she had no choice in the matter. The attentions of the fashionable world were, for the future, not likely to be pressed on her; she had done with it, or rather it with her; and yet, thanks to her dead father's act—so mistaken, yet so well meaning, so cruel, yet so kind—she had lost for ever the friend who would have made up for all. "If Vernon or myself can be of the least use to you," Mr. Felspar had written, "it will give us the greatest pleasure;" and she did not doubt his words, but to her sore and desolate heart they had (as regarded Vernon at least) a knell of farewell in them.

To do her justice, Ella regretted nothing in her past life that money or position had had any hand in; she reflected, without a sigh of regret, that she would no longer be courted or sought after; and yet her disposition was what, in a man, would have been termed social. She enjoyed the interchange of ideas, had a keen sense of humour, and a yearning for sympathy in the way of tastes and pursuits that was all the stronger, perhaps, since, until within the last few weeks, it had been utterly denied her. If she had had no experience of it, her feelings, she bitterly reflected, would not now be so poignant; it would have been even possible for her to look forward to some such lot in life as her Aunt Esther's without discontent, or, at all events, despair; but now she dared not contemplate it. It was not pride that forbad it—pride and the causes of it were more than ever abhorrent to her—but the sense that she was unfitted for dependence. Heaven grant, she prayed, that

she might be her own mistress; then no matter whether or no she had any other servant.

Of the young, at least, it is true that "sorrow endures for a night," and "joy"—or, at least, resolve and contentment—"cometh in the morning." After an hour or two of dark, despairing thoughts, the clouds began to lift a little from Ella's mind. Surely if, as she had told herself, she was unfitted for dependence, she must be fit for something that would make her independent, or what right had she to be cumbering the earth at all? She gave one deep sigh, then sighed no more, but, rising from her chair, put Mr. Felspar's letter carefully away in her desk, and proceeded to reply to that of Messrs. Pater and Son. After acknowledging their cheque, she expressed her willingness to undertake to the best of her ability any work which they might be so good as to entrust her with, but at the same time honestly informed them how young and inexperienced she was, and how much she stood in need of counsel. Confession may be good for the soul; but it is doubtful whether the avowal of incapacity to the parties desirous of securing our services is quite judicious. Messrs. Pater and Son were a newly-established firm, chiefly known as the proprietors of the *Mayfair Keepsake*, itself a very bantling among magazines, and they had a tendency to patronise rising geniuses, whether authors or artists, who (unlike green peas) are cheapest when very young. It is to the credit of Ella's common-sense that, on writing to Bearward's in the Strand in accordance with Mr. Felspar's recommendation, she mentioned to them the possibility of her getting employment from the *Keepsake*, which gave them a notion of what she wanted, or they might have sent her some very fine specimens of wood blocks indeed.

It was astonishing what a change the composition and despatch of these two little business letters wrought in her. There was but little in them even of hope; but a hunger had seized her heart to be up and doing, and they were the first steps upon the road to Work—than which the Giver of all good has given us few things better worth the having.

An hour afterwards Aunt Esther returned, and found her niece poring over a large book which she had found in one of the bookshelves. From her attitude and rapt expression she took it for granted it was the Bible.

"I see you have found comfort already, my darling," said she softly, "from the only place where it is to be looked for. It is not here, but afar off——"

"Just so," interrupted Ella smiling, showing her the title of the volume, which was *On Perspective*. "You are quite right, dear aunt; only, just now, *laborare est orare* is my motto. It is printed on a scroll in the schoolroom at Minerva House, and Miss Steele used to translate it to the housemaid, 'There is nothing like elbow-grease.'"

"Why, my dear Ella, what has come to you? You are quite merry."

"I am not going any longer to be morbid, at all events," she answered cheerfully. "What did you say was the dinner hour?"

"Well, the ordinary time is seven, but you are to have your meals just when you like."

"Then that is at seven, with the rest of the—the Household, if you please, aunt. I am not going to mope any longer. I had rather do just like other people."

"What! Will you dine with me and Mr. Heyton?"

"Certainly—that is, I want no difference to be made on my account."

"But you are not to think—his Highness particularly said so—that you are putting any one to inconvenience. On the other hand, it will certainly be better for you not to shut yourself up alone."

"It will be much better, dear aunt," said Ella brightly. "Will these letters be in time for the post?"

"They will be just in time; but have you not written to Mr. Felspar?"

"I did not think there was any necessity." She endeavoured to speak carelessly, but the effort it cost her convinced her how wise was her resolve to fly from reflection on certain matters.

"Well, well, no doubt you are the best judge, dear; else I thought his letter very kind, and it doesn't do to break with old friends."

Ella gave some dumb sign of acquiescence. If she had spoken, she felt that the tears would have fallen that tell far more than words.

"However, perhaps you will see him again some day," added Aunt Esther cheerfully; "who knows? Then you can give him your thanks in person, with one of your own pretty smiles."

Ella shut her lips, and once more nodded assent. It was marvelous to her that so kind a creature as Aunt Esther did not perceive that the topic she had chosen was a distressing one.

"I will just put your letters in the hall box, as there is no time to lose," continued the old lady. "There is the gong for dressing—not that you want to put on anything to make you look nicer, my dear, I'm sure; I shall come to take you in to dinner instead of a cavalier."

Rambles among Books.

NO. III.—THE ESSAYISTS.

ONE of our national characteristics, we are told, is a love of sermons of all varieties, from sermons in stone to sermons in rhyme. We have no reason, that I can see, to be ashamed of our taste. We make an awkward figure when we disavow or disguise it. The spectacle of a solid John Bull trying to give himself the airs of a graceful, sensitive, pleasure-loving creature, indifferent to the duties of life and content with the spontaneous utterance of emotion, is always ridiculous. We cannot do it—whether it be worth doing or not. We try desperately to be æsthetic, but we can't help laughing at ourselves in the very act: and the only result is that we sometimes substitute painfully immoral for painfully moral sermons. We are just as clumsy as before, and a good deal less natural. I accept the fact without seeking to justify it, and I hold that every Englishman loves a sermon in his heart. We grumble dreadfully, it is true, over the quality of the sermons provided by the official representatives of the art. In this, as in many previous long vacations, there will probably be a lively discussion in the papers as to the causes of the dulness of modern pulpits. I always wonder, for my part, that our hard-worked clergy can turn out so many entertaining and impressive discourses as they actually do.

At present I have nothing to say to the sermon properly so called. There is another kind of sermon, the demand for which is conclusively established by the exuberance of the supply. Few books, I fancy, have been more popular in modern times than certain lay-sermons, composed, as it seems to scoffers, of the very quintessence of commonplace. If such popularity were an adequate test of merit, we should have to reckon amongst the highest intellectual qualities the power of pouring forth a gentle and continuous maundering about things in general. We swallow with unailing appetite a feeble dilution of harmless philanthropy mixed with a little stingless satirising of anything that interrupts the current of complacent optimism. We like to hear a thoroughly comfortable person purring contentedly in his arm-chair, and declaring that everything must be for the best in a world which has provided him so liberally with buttered rolls and a blazing fire. He hums out a satisfactory little string of platitudes as soothing as the voice of his own kettle singing on the hob. If a man of sterner nature or more daring intellect breaks in with a harsh declaration that there are evils too deep to be remedied by a letter to the *Times*, mocks at our ideal of petty domestic comfort, and even swears that some of our

heroes are charlatans and our pet nostrums mere quackery, we are inexpressibly shocked, and unite to hoot him down as a malevolent cynic. He professes, in sober earnest, to disbelieve in us. Obviously he must be a disbeliever in all human virtue; and so, having settled his business, we return to our comfortable philosopher, and lap ourselves in his gentle eulogies of our established conventions. I do not know, indeed, that we change very decidedly for the better when we turn up our noses at a diet of mere milk and water, and stimulate our jaded palate with an infusion of literary bitters. The cynic and the sentimentalist who preach to us by turns in the social essay, often differ very slightly in the intrinsic merit or even in the substance of their discourses. Respondent and opponent are really on the same side in these little disputations, though they make a great show of deadly antagonism. I have often felt it to be a melancholy reflection that some of the most famous witticisms ever struck out—the saying about the use of language or the definition of gratitude—have been made by what seems to be almost a mechanical device—the inversion of a truism. Nothing gives a stronger impression of the limited range of the human intellect. In fact, it seems that the essay writer has to make his choice between the platitude and the paradox. If he wishes for immediate success he will probably do best by choosing the platitude. One of the great secrets of popularity—though it requires a discreet application—is not to be too much afraid of boring your audience. The most popular of modern writers have acted upon the principle. You may learn from Dickens that you cannot make your jokes too obvious or repeat them too often; and from Macaulay that you should grudge no labour spent in proving that two and two make four. The public should be treated as a judicious barrister treats a common jury. It applauds most lustily the archer who is quite certain of hitting a haystack at ten paces: not the one who can sometimes split a willow wand at a hundred. Even the hardened essayist feels a little compunction at times. He is conscious that he has been anticipated in the remark that life is uncertain, and doubts whether he can season it with wit enough to get rid of the insipidity. “Of all the vices which degrade the human character,” said the youthful Osborne in the essay which Amelia produced to Dobbin, “selfishness is the most odious and contemptible. An undue love of self leads to the most monstrous crimes, and occasions the greatest misfortunes both to States and families.” Young Osborne succeeded in staggering through two or three sentences more, though he ends, it is true, by dropping into something like tautology. But really, when I consider the difficulty of saying anything, I am half-inclined to agree with his tutor’s opinion that there was no office in the Bar or the Senate to which the lad might not aspire. How many sermons would reduce themselves to repeating this statement over and over again for the prescribed twenty minutes! And yet some skilful essayists have succeeded in giving a great charm to such remarks; and I rather wonder that amongst the various selec-

tions now so fashionable, some one has not thought of a selection of our best periodical essays. Between the days of Bacon and our own, a sufficient number have been produced to furnish some very interesting volumes.

The essay writer is the lay preacher upon that vague mass of doctrine which we dignify by the name of knowledge of life or of human nature. He has to do with the science in which we all graduate as we grow old, when we try to pack our personal observations into a few sententious aphorisms not quite identical with the old formulæ. It is a strange experience which happens to some people to grow old in a day, and to find that some good old saying—"vanity of vanities," for example—which you have been repeating ever since you first left college and gave yourself the airs of a man of the world, has suddenly become a vivid and striking impression of a novel truth, and has all the force of a sudden discovery. In one of Poe's stories, a clever man hides an important document by placing it exactly in the most obvious and conspicuous place in the room. That is the principle, it would sometimes seem, which accounts for the preservation of certain important secrets of life. They are hidden from the uninitiated just because the phrases in which they are couched are so familiar. We fancy, in our youth, that our elders must either be humbugs—which is the pleasantest and most obvious theory—or that they must have some little store of esoteric wisdom which they keep carefully to themselves. The initiated become aware that neither hypothesis is true. Experience teaches some real lessons; but they are taught in the old words. The change required is in the mind of the thinker, not in the symbols of his thought. Worldly wisdom is summed up in the familiar currency which has passed from hand to hand through the centuries; and we find on some catastrophe, or by the gradual process of advancing years, that mystic properties lurk unsuspected in the domestic halfpenny.

The essayist should be able, more or less, to anticipate this change, and make us see what is before our eyes. It is easy enough for the mere hawker of sterile platitudes to imitate his procedure, and to put on airs of superhuman wisdom when retailing the barren *exuviae* of other men's thought. But there are some rare books, in reading which we slowly become aware that we have to do with the man who has done all that can be done in this direction—that is, rediscovered the old discoveries for himself. Chief, beyond rivalry, amongst all such performances, in our own language at least, is Bacon's *Essays*. Like Montaigne, he represents, of course, the mood in which the great aim of the ablest thinkers was precisely to see facts for themselves instead of taking them on trust. And though Bacon has not the delightful egotism or the shrewd humour of his predecessors, and substitutes the tersest method of presenting his thought for the discursive rambling characteristic of the prince of all essayists, the charm of his writing is almost equally due to his unconscious revelation of character. One can imagine a careless reader,

indeed, skimming the book in a hurry, and setting down the author as a kind of Polonius—a venerable old person with a plentiful lack of wit and nothing on his tongue but “words, words, words.” In spite of the weighty style, surcharged, as it seems, with thought and experience, we might quote maxim after maxim from its pages with a most suspicious air of Polonius wisdom; and though Polonius, doubtless, had been a wise man in his day, Hamlet clearly took him for an old bore, and dealt with him as we could all wish at moments to deal with bores. “He that is plentiful in expense of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay.” Does it require a “large-browed Verulam,” one of the first “of those that know,” to give us that valuable bit of information? Or—to dip into his pages at random—could we not have guessed for ourselves that if a man “easily pardons and remits offences, it shows”—what?—“that his mind is planted above injuries;” or, again, that “good thoughts are little better than good dreams except they be put in act;” or even that a man “should be sure to leave other men their turns to speak.” “Here be truths,” and set forth as solemnly as if they were calculated to throw a new light upon things in general. But it would be hard to demand even of a Bacon that he should refrain from all that has been said before. And the impression—if it ever crosses the mind of a perverse critic—that Bacon was a bit of a windbag, very rapidly disappears. It would be far less difficult to find pages free from platitude than to find one in which there is not some condensed saying which makes us acknowledge that the mark has been hit, and the definitive form imposed upon some hazy notion which has been vaguely hovering about the mind, and eluding all our attempts to grasp it. We have not thought just that, but something which clearly ought to have been that. Occasionally, of course, this is due to the singular power in which Bacon, whatever his other merits or defects, excels all other philosophic writers; the power which springs from a unique combination of the imaginative and speculative faculties, of finding some vivid concrete image to symbolise abstract truths. It is exhibited again in the perverted, but often delightful, ingenuity with which he reads philosophical meanings into old mythological legends, entirely innocent, as a matter of fact, of any such matter; which often makes us fancy that he was a new incarnation of *Æsop*, able to construct the most felicitous parables at a moment's notice, to illustrate any conceivable combination of ideas; a power, too, which is connected with his weakness, and helps to explain how he could be at once an almost inspired prophet of a coming scientific era, and yet curiously wanting in genuine aptitude for scientific inquiry. It is, perhaps, the more one-sided and colourless intellect which is best fitted for achievement, though incapable of clothing its ambition in the resplendent hues of Bacon's imagination.

In the *Essays* the compression of the style keeps this power in subordination. Analogies are suggested in a pregnant sentence, not elaborated and brought forward in the pomp of stately rhetoric. Only,

as we become familiar with the book, we become more aware of the richness and versatility of intellect which it implies, and conscious of the extreme difficulty of characterising it or its author in any compendious phrase. That has hardly been done; or, what is worse, it has been misdone. Readers who do not shrink from Mr. Spedding's * seven solid volumes may learn to know Bacon; and will admit at least that the picture drawn by that loving hand differs as much from Macaulay's slapdash blacks and whites as a portrait by a master from the audacious caricature of a contemporary satirist. But Mr. Spedding was characteristically anxious that his readers should draw their own conclusions. He left it to a successor, who has not hitherto appeared, to sum up the total impressions of the amazingly versatile and complex character, and to show how inadequately it is represented by simply heaping together a mass of contradictions, and calling them a judgment. Perhaps a thorough study of the *Essays* would be enough by itself to make us really intimate with their author. For we see as we read that Bacon is a typical example of one of the two great races between whom our allegiance is generally divided. He would be despised by the Puritan as worldly, and would retort by equal contempt for the narrow bigotry of Puritanism. You cannot admire him heartily if the objects of your hero-worship are men of the Cromwell or Luther type. The stern imperious man of action, who aims straight at the heart, who is efficient in proportion as he is one-sided, to whom the world presents itself as an internecine struggle between the powers of light and darkness, who can see nothing but eternal truths on one side and damnable lies on the other, who would reform by crushing his opponents to the dust, and regards all scruples that might trammel his energies as so much hollow cant, is undoubtedly an impressive phenomenon. But it is also plain that he must have suppressed half his nature; he has lost in breadth what he has gained in immensity; and the merits of a Bacon depend precisely upon the richness of his mind and the width of his culture. He cannot help sympathising with all the contemporary currents of thought. He is tempted to injustice only in regard to the systems which seem to imply the stagnation of thought. He hates bigotry, and bigotry alone, but bigotry in every possible phase, even when it is accidentally upon his own side. His sympathies are so wide that he cannot help taking all knowledge for his province. The one lesson which he cannot learn is Goethe's lesson of "renouncing." The whole universe is so interesting that every avenue for thought must be kept open. He is at once a philosopher, a statesman, a lawyer, a man of science, and an omnivorous student of literature. The widest theorising and the minutest experiment are equally welcome; he is as much interested in arranging a masque or laying out a garden, as in a political intrigue or a legal re-

* They may learn as much from the admirable *Evenings with a Reviewer*, which unfortunately remains a privately-printed book, not easy to get sight of.

form or a logical speculation. The weakness of such a man in political life is grossly misinterpreted when it is confounded with the baseness of a servile courtier. It is not that he is without aims, and lofty aims; but that they are complex, far-reaching, and too wide for vulgar comprehension. He cannot join the party of revolution or the party of obstruction, for he desires the equable development of the whole organisation. The danger is not that he will defy reason, but that he will succeed in finding reasons for any conceivable course. The world's business, as he well knows, has to be carried on with the help of the stupid and the vile; and he naturally errs on the side of indulgence and compliance, hoping to work men to the furtherance of views of which they are unable to grasp the importance. His tolerance is apt to slide into worldliness, and his sensibility to all manner of impulses makes him vulnerable upon many points, and often takes the form of timidity. The time-serving of the profligate means a desire for personal gratification; the time-serving of a Bacon means too great a readiness to take the world as it is, and to use questionable tools in the pursuit of vast and elevated designs.

The *Essays* reflect these characteristics. They are the thoughts of a philosopher who is not content to accept any commonplace without independent examination; but who is as little disposed to reject an opinion summarily because it has a slightly immoral aspect as to reject a scientific experiment because it contradicts an established theory. We must hear what the vicious man has to say for himself, as well as listen to the virtuous. He shows his tendency in the opening essay. The dearest of all virtues to the philosophic mind is truth, and there is no sincerer lover of such truth than Bacon. But he will not overlook the claims of falsehood. "Truth may, perhaps, come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." That famous sentence is just one of the sayings which the decorous moralist is apt to denounce or to hide away in dexterous verbiage. Bacon's calm recognition of the fact is more impressive, and, perhaps, not really less moral. The essay upon *Simulation and Dissimulation* may suggest more qualms to the rigorous. Dissimulation, it is true, is condemned as a "faint kind of policy and wisdom;" it is the "weaker sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers." But this denunciation has to be refined and shaded away. For, in the first place, a habit of secrecy is both "moral and politic." But secrecy implies more; for "no man can be secret except he give himself a little scope of dissimulation; which is, as it were, but the skirts or train of secrecy." But if secrecy leads to dissimulation, will not dissimulation imply downright simulation—in plain English, lying? "That," replies Bacon, "I hold more culpable and less politic, except it be in rare and great matters." He enumerates their advantages, and their counterbalancing disadvantages; and the summing-up is one of his characteristic sentences. "The best composition and temperature is to love openness in

fame and opinion; secrecy in habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign if there be no remedy."

How skilfully the claims of morality and policy are blended! How delicately we slide from the virtue of holding our tongues to the advisability of occasional lying! "You old rogue!" exclaims the severe moralist, "your advice is simply—don't lie, unless you can lie to your advantage, and without loss of credit." And yet it really seems, if we follow Mr. Spedding's elaborate investigations, that Bacon lied remarkably little for a statesman—especially for a timid statesman—in an age of elaborate intrigues. I fancy that the student of recent history would admit that the art of dexterous equivocation had not fallen entirely out of use, and is not judged with great severity when an opponent asks an awkward question in Parliament. A cynic might even declare the chief difference to be that we now disavow the principles upon which we really act, and so lie to ourselves as well as to others; whereas Bacon was at least true to himself, and, if forced to adopt a theory of expediency, would not blink the fact. It is this kind of sincerity to which the *Essays* owe part of their charm to every thoughtful reader. We must not go to them for lofty or romantic morality—for sayings satisfactory to the purist or the enthusiast. We have a morality, rather, which has been refracted through a mind thoroughly imbued with worldly wisdom, and ready to accept the compromises which a man who mixes with his fellows on equal terms must often make with his conscience. He is no hermit to renounce the world, for the world is, after all, a great fact; nor to retire to a desert because the air of cities is tainted by the lungs of his fellows. He accepts the code which is workable, not that which is ideally pure. He loves in all things the true *via media*. He objects to atheism, for religion is politically useful; but he is quite as severe upon superstition, which is apt to generate a more dangerous fanaticism. He considers love to be a kind of excusable weakness, so long as men "sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life;" but he is eloquent and forcible in exalting friendship, without which a man may as well "quit the stage." In this, indeed, Bacon (we will take Mr. Spedding's view of that little affair about Essex) seems to have spoken from his own experience; and in spite of the taint of worldliness, the feeling that there is something tepid in their author's nature, a certain want of cordiality in the grasp of his hand—we feel that the *Essays* have a merit beyond that which belongs to them as genuine records of the observation of life at first hand by a man of vast ability and varied and prolonged experience. They show, too, a marvellously rich and sensitive nature, capable of wide sympathies, with all manner of interests, devoted to a grand and far-reaching ambition, though not sufficiently contemptuous of immediate expediency, and fully appreciative of the really valuable elements in human life. If he has the weaknesses—he has also, in a surpassing degree, the merits—of a true cosmopolitan, or citizen of this world, whose wisdom, if not as childlike as the Christian preacher

requires, is most certainly not childish. When we add the literary genius which has coined so many pregnant aphorisms, and stamped even truisms with his own image and superscription, we can understand why the *Essays* have come home to men's business and bosoms.

It is amusing to compare Bacon with the always delightful Fuller, in regard to whom Coleridge declares that his amazing wit has deprived him of the credit due to his soundness of judgment. The statement does not quite cover the ground. Fuller in the *Holy and Profane State* and Bacon in the *Essays* have each given us a short sermon upon the text *Be angry and sin not*. Fuller undoubtedly makes the greatest display of intellectual fireworks. In half-a-dozen short paragraphs, he gets off as many witticisms, good, bad, and inimitable. A man who can't be angry, he says, is like the Caspian sea which never ebbs or flows: to be angry on slight cause, is to fire the beacons at the landing of every cockboat: you should beware of doing irrevocable mischief when you are angry, for Samson's hair grew again, but not his eyes: he tells us that manna did not corrupt when left over the Sabbath, whereas anger then corrupts most of all: and then we have that irresistible piece of absurdity which so delighted Charles Lamb; we are warned not to take too literally the apostle's direction not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, for "then might our wrath lengthen with the days, and men in Greenland, where day lasts above a quarter of the year, might have plentiful scope of revenge." Undoubtedly Fuller's astonishing ingenuity in striking out illustrations of this kind, excites, as Coleridge says, our sense of the wonderful. If we read in search of amusement, we are rewarded at every page; we shall never fail to make a bag in beating his coverts: and beyond a doubt we shall bring back as well a healthy liking for the shrewd lively simplicity which has provided them. But it is equally undeniable that Fuller never takes the trouble to distinguish between an illustration which really gives light to our feet and a sudden flash of brilliancy which disappears to leave the obscurity unchanged. He cannot refrain from a ludicrous analogy, which is often all the more amusing just because it is preposterously inapplicable. Here and there we have a really brilliant stroke and then an audacious pun, not, perhaps, a play upon words, but a play upon ideas which is quite as superficial. At bottom we feel that the excellent man has expended his energy, not in "chewing and digesting" the formula which serves him for a text, but in overlaying it with quaint conceits. Bacon gives us no such flashes of wit, though certainly not from inability to supply them; but he says a thing which we remember: "Men must beware that they carry their anger rather with scorn than with fear, so that they may seem to be rather above the injury than below it; which is a thing easily done, if a man will give a law to himself in it." The remark is doubtless old enough in substance; but it reveals at once the man who does not allow a truism to run through his mind without weighing or testing it; who has impartially considered the uses of anger and the proper mode

of disciplining it; and who can aid us with a judicious hint or two as to the best plan of making others angry, an art of great utility, whatever its morality, in many affairs of life.

The essay, as Bacon understood it, is indeed a trying form of utterance. A man must be very confident of the value of his own meditations upon things in general, and of his capacity for "looking wiser than any man ever really was" before he should venture to adopt his form. I cannot remember any English book deserving to be put in the same class, unless it be Sir Henry Taylor's essays, the *Statesman* and *Notes upon Life*, which have the resemblance at least of reflecting, in admirably graceful English, the mellowed wisdom of a cultivated and meditative mind, which has tested commonplaces by the realities of the world and its business. But a few men have thoughts which will bear being presented simply and straightforwardly, and which have specific gravity enough to dispense with adventitious aids. A Frenchman can always season his wisdom with epigram, and coins his reflections into the form of detached *pensées*. But our language or our intellect is too blunt for such jewellery in words. We cannot match Pascal, or Rochefoucauld, or Vauvenargues, or Chamfort. Our modes of expression are lumbering, and seem to have been developed rather in the pulpit than in the rapid interchange of animated conversation. The essay after Bacon did not crystallise into separate drops of sparkling wit, but became more continuous, less epigrammatic, and easier in its flow. Cowley just tried his hand at the art enough to make us regret that he did not give us more prose and fewer Pindarics. Sir William Temple's essays give an interesting picture of the statesman who has for once realised the dream so often cherished in vain, of a retirement to books and gardens; but the thought is too superficial and the style too slipshod for enduring popularity; and that sturdy, hot-headed, pugnacious, and rather priggish moralist, Jeremy Collier, poured out some hearty, rugged essays, which make us like the man, but feel that he is too much of the pedagogue, brandishing a birch-rod wherewith to whip our sins out of us. The genuine essayist appeared with Steele and Addison and their countless imitators. Some salvage from the vast mass of periodicals which have sunk into the abysses appears upon our shelves in the shape of forty odd volumes, duly annotated and expounded by laborious commentators. It is amusing to glance over the row, from the *Tatler* to the *Looker-on*, from the days of Steele to those of Cumberland and Mackenzie, the "Man of Feeling," and reflect upon the simple-mindedness of our great-grandfathers. Nothing brings back to us more vividly the time of the good old British "gentlewoman;" the contemporary of the admirable Mrs. Chapone and Mrs. Carter, who even contributed short papers to the *Rambler*, and regarded the honour as a patent of immortality; who formed Richardson's court, and made tea for Johnson; who wrote letters about the "improvement of the mind," and at times ventured upon a translation of a classical moralist, but enquired with some

anxiety whether a knowledge of Latin was consistent with the delicacy of the female sex; and thought it a piece of delicate flattery when a male author condescended to write down to the level of their comprehension. Lady Mary seems to have been the only woman of the century who really felt herself entitled to a claim of intellectual equality; and the feminine author was regarded much in the same way as a modern lady in the hunting-field. It was a question whether she should be treated with exceptional forbearance, or warned off a pursuit rather too rough for a true womanly occupation. Johnson's famous comparison of the preaching women to the dancing dogs gives the general sentiment. They were not admired for writing well, but for writing at all.

We have changed all this, and there is something pathetic in the tentative and modest approaches of our grandmothers to the pursuits in which their granddaughters have achieved the rights and responsibilities of equal treatment.

But it is necessary to remember, in reading the whole *Spectator* and its successors, that this audience is always in the background. It is literature written by gentlemen for ladies—that is, for persons disposed to sit at gentlemen's feet. Bacon is delivering his thoughts for the guidance of thoughtful aspirants to fame; and Temple is acting the polished statesman in the imagined presence of wits and courtiers. But Steele and Addison make it their express boast that they write for the good of women, who have hitherto been limited to an intellectual diet of decent devotional works or of plays and romances. The *Spectator* is to lie on the table by the side of the morning dish of chocolate; and every writer in a periodical knows how carefully he must bear in mind the audience for which he is catering. The form once fixed was preserved throughout the century with a persistency characteristic of the sheep-like race of authors. Every successor tried to walk in Addison's footsteps. The *World*, as somebody tells us, was the Ulysses' bow in which all the wits of the day tried their strength. The fine gentlemen, like Chesterfield and Walpole, too nice to rub shoulders with the ordinary denizens of Grub Street, ventured into this select arena with the encouragement of some easily dropped mask of anonymity. It is amusing to observe on what easy terms glory was to be won by such achievements. There was the exemplary Mr. Grove, of Taunton, who wrote a paper in the *Spectator*, which, according to Johnson, was "one of the finest pieces in the English language," though I suppose but few of my readers can recollect a word of it, and Mr. Ince, of Gray's Inn, who frequented Tom's Coffee House, and was apparently revered by other frequenters on the strength of a compliment from Steele to some contributions never identified. Nay, a certain Mr. Elphinstone, seen in the flesh by Hazlitt, was surrounded for fifty years by a kind of faint halo of literary fame, because he had discharged the humble duty of translating the mottoes to the *Rambler*. The fame, indeed, has not been very enduring. We have lost our appetite for this simple food. Very few people, we may suspect,

give their days and nights to the study of Addison, any more than a youthful versifier tries to catch the echo of Pope. We are rather disposed to laugh at the classical motto which serves in place of a text, and must have given infinite trouble to some unfortunate scribblers. The gentle raillery of feminine foibles in dress or manners requires to be renewed in every generation with the fashions to which it refers. The novelettes are of that kind of literature which are too much like tracts, insipid to tastes accustomed to the full-blown novel developed in later times. A classical allegory or a so-called Eastern tale has become a puerility like the old-fashioned pastoral. We half regret the days when a man with a taste for fossils or butterflies was called a *virtuoso*, and considered an unfailing butt for easy ridicule; but we are too much under the thumb of the scientific world to reveal our sentiments. And as for the criticism, with its elaborate inanities about the unities and the rules of epic poetry, and the authority of Aristotle and M. Bossu, we look down upon it from the heights of philosophical æsthetics, and rejoice complacently in the infallibility of modern tastes. Were it not for *Sir Roger de Coverley*, the old-fashioned essay would be well-nigh forgotten, except by some examiner who wants a bit of pure English to be turned into Latin prose.

Oblivion of this kind is the natural penalty of labouring upon another man's foundations. There is clearly a presumption that the form struck out by Addison would not precisely suit Fielding or Johnson or Goldsmith; and accordingly we read *Tom Jones* and the *Vicar of Wakefield* and the *Lives of the Poets* without troubling ourselves to glance at the *Champion* or the *Covent Garden Journal*. We make a perfunctory study even of the *Bee* and the *Citizen of the World*, and are irreverent about the *Rambler*. We may find in them, indeed, abundant traces of Fielding's rough irony and hearty common-sense, and of Goldsmith's delicate humour and felicity of touch; but Goldsmith, when forced to continuous dissertation, has to spin his thread too fine, and Fielding seems to be uncomfortably cramped within the narrow limits of the essay. The *Rambler* should not have a superfluous word said against it; for the very name has become a kind of scarecrow; and yet any one who will skip most of the criticisms and all the amusing passages may suck much profitable and not unpleasing melancholy out of its ponderous pages. It is all the pleasanter for its contrast to the kind of jaunty optimism which most essayists adopt as most congenial to easy-going readers. I like to come upon one of Johnson's solemn utterances of a conviction of the radical wretchedness of life. "The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical but palliative. Infelicity is involved in corporeal nature, and interwoven with our being; all attempts, therefore, to decline it wholly are useless and vain; the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side; the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity; and the strongest armour which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them." This

melancholy monotone of sadness, coming from a brave and much-enduring nature, is impressive, but it must be admitted that it would make rather severe reading at a tea-table—even when presided over by that ornament to her sex, the translator of Epictetus. And poor Johnson, being painfully sensible that he must not deviate too far from his Addison, makes an elephantine gambol or two with a very wry face; and is only comical by his failure.

I take it, in fact, to be established that within his special and narrow province Addison was unique. Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt tried to exalt Steele above his colleague. We can perfectly understand their affection for the chivalrous, warm-hearted Irishman. When a virtuous person rebukes the extravagance of a thoughtless friend by the broad hint of putting an execution into his house, we naturally take part with the offender. We have a sense that Addison got a little more than his deserts in this world, whilst Steele got a little less, and we wish to make the balance even. And to some extent this applies in a literary sense. Steele has more warmth and pathos than Addison; he can speak of women without the patronising tone of his leader, and would hardly, like him, have quoted for their benefit the famous theory of Pericles as to their true glory. And, yet, it does not want any refined criticism to recognise Addison's superiority. Steele's admirers have tried to vindicate for him a share in Sir Roger; but any one who reads the papers in which that memorable character is described, will see that all the really fine touches are contributed by Addison. Steele took one of the most promising incidents, the courtship of the widow, and the paper in which this appears is the furthest below the general level. To have created Sir Roger—the forefather of so many exquisite characters, for surely he is closely related to Parson Adams, and Uncle Toby, and Doctor Primrose, and Colonel Newcome—is Addison's greatest achievement, and the most characteristic of the man. For it is impossible not to feel that some injustice is done to Addison when grave writers like M. Taine, for example, treat him seriously as a novelist or a political theorist, or even as a critic. Judged by any severe standard, his morality and his political dissertations and his critical disquisitions—the immortal papers, for example, upon the Imagination and upon *Paradise Lost*—are puerile enough. With all our love of sermons, we can be almost as much bored as M. Taine himself by some of Addison's prosings. The charm of the man is just in the admirable simplicity of which Sir Roger is only an imaginative projection. Addison, it is true, smiles at the knight's little absurdities from the platform of superior scholarship. He feels himself to be on the highest level of the culture of his time—a scholar, a gentleman—fit to sit in council with Somers, or to interpret the speculations of Locke. But at bottom he is precisely of the same material as the fine old squire with whom he sympathises. His simplicity is not destroyed by learning to write Latin verses or even by becoming a Secretary of State. Sir Roger does not accept the teaching of his chaplain with more reve-

rence than Addison feels for Tillotson and the admirable Dr. Scott, whose authority has become very faded for us. The squire accepts Baker's chronicle as his sole and infallible authority in all matters of history ; but Addison's history would pass muster just as little with Mr. Freeman or Dr. Stubbs. We smile at Sir Roger's satisfaction with the progress of the Church of England when a rigid dissenter eats plentifully of his Christmas plum-porridge ; but there is something almost equally simple-minded in Addison's conviction that the prosecutors of Sacheverell had spoken the very last words of political wisdom, and even the good Sir Roger's criticisms of the *Distressed Mother* are not much simpler in substance, though less ambitious in form, than Addison's lectures upon similar topics. Time has put us as much beyond the artist as the artist was beyond his model, and, though he is in part the accomplice, he must also be taken as partly the object of some good-humoured ridicule. We cannot sit at his feet as a political teacher ; but we see that his politics really mean the spontaneous sympathy of a kindly and generous nature, which receives a painful jar from the sight of bigotry and oppression. His theology, as M. Taine rather superfluously insists, represents the frigid and prosaic type of contemporary divines ; but it is only the external covering of that tender sentiment of natural piety to which we owe some of the most exquisite hymns in the language. In short, the occasional pretentiousness of the man, when he wants to deliver *ex cathedra* judgments upon points of criticism and morality, becomes a very venial and rather amusing bit of affectation. It shows only the docility—perhaps rather excessive—with which a gentle and rather timid intellect accepts, at their own valuation, the accepted teachers of his day ; and, having put away all thoughts of judging him by an inapplicable standard, we can enjoy him for what he really is without further qualification ; we can delight in the urbanity which is the indication of a childlike nature unspoilt by familiarity with the world ; we can admire equally the tenderness, guided by playful fancy, of the Vision of Mirza, or the legend of Marraton and Yaratilda, and the passages in which he amuses himself with some such trifle as ladies' patches, handling his plaything so dexterously as never to be too ponderous, whilst somehow preserving, by mere unconscious wit, an air as of amiable wisdom relaxing for a moment from severer thought. Addison's imitators flounder awkwardly enough, for the most part, in attempting to repeat a performance which looks so easy after its execution ; but in truth, the secret, though it may be an open one, is not easily appropriated. You have only to acquire Addison's peculiar nature, his delicacy of perception, his tenderness of nature held in check by excessive sensibility, his generosity of feeling which can never hurry him out of the safe entrenchment of thorough respectability, his intense appreciation of all that is pure and beautiful so long as it is also of good report—you must have, in short, the fine qualities along with the limitations of his character, and then you will spontaneously express, in this kind of lambent

humour, the quiet, sub-sarcastic playfulness which could gleam out so delightfully when he was alone with a friend, or with his pen, and a bottle of port to give him courage.

Essay-writing, thus understood, is as much one of the lost arts as good letter-writing or good talk. We are too distracted, too hurried. The town about which these essayists are always talking, meant a limited society; it has now become a vast chaos of distracted atoms, whirled into momentary contact, but not coalescing into permanent groups. A sensitive, reserved Addison would go to his club in the days when a club meant a social gathering instead of an oppressive house of call for 1,200 gentlemen, glaring mutual distrust across their newspaper. He has his recognised corner at the coffee-house, where he could listen undisturbed to the gossip of the regular frequenters. He would retire to his lodgings with a chosen friend, and gradually thaw under the influence of his bottle and his pipe of tobacco, till he poured out his little speculations to his companion, or wrote them down for an audience which he knew as a country parson knows his congregation. He could make little confidential jokes to the public, for the public was only an enlarged circle of friends. At the present day, such a man, for he was a man of taste and reflection, finds society an intolerable bore. He goes into it to be one of a crowd assembled for a moment to be dispersed in a dozen different crowds to-morrow; he is stuck down at a dinner-table between a couple of strangers, and has not time to break the ice or get beyond the conventional twaddle, unless, indeed, he meets some intrepid talker, who asks him between the soup and the fish whether he believes in the equality of the sexes or the existence of a Deity. He is lucky if he can count upon meeting his best friends once in a fortnight. He becomes famous, not to be the cherished companion of the day, but to be mobbed by a crowd. He may become a recluse, nowhere more easily than in London; but then he can hardly write effective essays upon life; or he may throw himself into some of the countless "movements" of the day, and will have to be in too deadly earnest for the pleasant interchange of social persiflage with a skilful blending of lively and severe. The little friendly circle of sympathetic hearers is broken up for good or bad, dissolved into fragments and whirled into mad confusion; and the talker on paper must change his tone as his audience is dispersed. Undoubtedly in some ways the present day is not merely favourable to essay-writing but a very paradise for essayists. Our magazines and journals are full of excellent performances. But their character is radically changed. They are serious discussions of important questions, where a man puts a whole system of philosophy into a dozen pages. Or else they differ from the old-fashioned essay as the address of a mob-orator differs from a speech to an organised assembly. The writer has not in his eye a little coterie of recognised authority, but is competing with countless rivals to catch the ear of that vague and capricious personage, the general reader. Sometimes

the general reader likes slow twaddle, and sometimes a spice of scandal ; but he is terribly apt to take irony for a personal insult, and to mistake delicacy for insipidity. It is true, indeed, that one kind of authority has become more imposing than ever. We are greatly exercised in our minds by the claims of the scientific critic ; but that only explains why it is so much easier to write about essay-writing than to write an essay oneself.

Some men, indeed, have enough of the humourist or the philosopher to withdraw from the crush and indulge in very admirable speculations. Essays may be mentioned which, though less popular than some downright twaddle, have a better chance of endurance. But, apart from the most modern performances, some of the very best of English essays came from the school which in some sense continued the old traditions. The "cockneys" of the first quarter of the century, still talked about the "town," as a distinct entity. Charles Lamb's supper parties were probably the last representatives of the old-fashioned club. Lamb, indeed, was the pet of a little clique of familiars, standing apart from the great world—not like Addison, the favourite of a society, including the chief political and social leaders of the day. The cockneys formed only a small and a rather despised section of society ; but they had not been swamped and overwhelmed in the crowd. London was not a shifting caravanserai, a vague aggregate of human beings, from which all traces of organic unity had disappeared. Names like Kensington or Hampstead still suggested real places, with oldest inhabitants and local associations, not confusing paraphrases for arbitrary fragments of S. or N. W. The Temple had its old benchers, men who had lived there under the eyes of neighbours, and whose personal characteristics were known as accurately as in any country village. The theatre of Lamb's day was not one amongst many places of amusement, with only such claims as may be derived from the star of the moment ; but a body with imposing historical associations, which could trace back its continuity through a dynasty of managers, from Sheridan to Garrick, and so to Cibber and Betterton, and the companies which exulted in the name of the King's servants. When sitting in the pit, he seemed to be taking the very place of Steele, and might still listen to the old "artificial comedy," for which we have become too moral or too squeamish. To read Elia's essays is to breathe that atmosphere again ; and to see that if Lamb did not write for so definite a circle as the old essayists, he is still representing a class with cherished associations, and a distinctive character. One should be a bit of a cockney fully to enjoy his writing ; to be able to reconstruct the picturesque old London with its quaint and grotesque aspects. For Lamb is nowhere more himself than in the humorous pathos with which he dwells upon the rapidly vanishing peculiarities of the old-fashioned world.

Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Hazlitt may be taken to represent this last phase of the old town life before the town had become a wilderness.

They have all written admirable essays, though Hunt's pure taste and graceful style scarcely atone for the want of force or idiosyncrasy. No such criticism could be made against his friends. Lamb was not only the pet of his own clique, but the pet of all subsequent critics. To say anything against him would be to provoke indignant remonstrance. An attack upon him would resemble an insult to a child. Yet I will venture to confess that Lamb has some of the faults from which no favourite of a little circle is ever quite free. He is always on the verge of affectation, and sometimes trespasses beyond the verge. There is a self-consciousness about him which in some moods is provoking. There is a certain bigotry about most humourists (as of a spoilt child) which has become a little tiresome. People have come to talk as if a sense of humour were one of the cardinal virtues. To have it is to be free of a privileged class, possessed of an esoteric system of critical wisdom. To be without it is to be a wretched matter-of-fact utilitarian pedant. The professed humourist considers the rest of mankind as though they were deprived of a faculty, incapable of a relish for the finest literary flavours. Lamb was one of the first representatives of this theory, and is always tacitly warning off the profane vulgar, typified by the prosaic Scotchman who pointed out that his wish to see Burns instead of Burns' son was impracticable, inasmuch as the poet himself was dead. The pretension is, of course, put forward by Lamb in the most amiable way, but it remains a pretension. Most people are docile enough to accept at his own valuation, or at that of his admirers, any man who claims a special privilege, and think it wise to hold their tongues if they do not perceive it to be fully justified by the facts. But I admit that, after a certain quantity of Lamb, I begin to feel a sympathy for the unimaginative Scotchman. I think that he has something to say for himself. Lamb, for example, was a most exquisite critic of the authors in whom he delighted. Nobody has said such admirable things about the old English dramatists, and a little exaggeration may be forgiven to so genuine a worshipper. But he helped to start the nuisance of "appreciative criticism," which proceeds on the assumptive fancy that it necessarily shows equal insight and geniality to pick up pebbles or real jewels from the rubbish-heaps of time. Lamb certainly is not to be blamed for the extravagance of his followers. But this exaltation of the tastes or fancies of a little coterie has always its dangers, and that is what limits one's affection for Lamb. Nobody can delight too much in the essay upon roast pig—the apologue in which contains as much sound philosophy as fine humour—or in Mrs. Battle's opinions upon whist, or the description of Christ's Hospital, or the old benchers of the Temple, or Oxford in the Long Vacation. Only I cannot get rid of the feeling which besets me when I am ordered to worship the idol of any small sect. Accept their shibboleths, and everything will go pleasantly. The underlying conceit and dogmatism will only turn its pleasanter side towards you, and show itself in tinging the admirable sentiments with

a slight affectation. Yet, one wants a little more fresh air, and one does not like to admire upon compulsion. Lamb's manner is inimitably graceful; but it reminds one just a little too much of an ancient beau, retailing his exquisite compliments, and putting his hearers on their best behaviour. Perhaps it shows the corruption of human nature, but I should be glad if now and then he could drop his falsetto and come out of his little entrenchment of elaborate reserve. I should feel certain that I see the natural man. "I am all over sophisticated," says Lamb, accounting for his imperfect sympathy with Quakers, "with humours, fancies craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chitchat, scandal, jokes, antiquities, and a thousand whims which their simpler taste could do without." There are times when the simpler taste is a pleasant relief to the most skilful dandling of whims; and it is at those times that one revolts not exactly against Lamb, but against the intolerance of true Lamb worshippers.

The reader who is tired of Lamb's delicate confections, and wants a bit of genuine nature, a straightforward uncompromising utterance of antipathy and indignation, need not go far. Hazlitt will serve his turn; and for that reason I can very often read Hazlitt with admiration when Lamb rather palls upon me. If Hazlitt has the weaknesses of a cockney, they take a very different form. He could hardly have been the ideal of any sect which did not enjoy frequent slaps in the face from the object of its worship. He has acquired, to an irritating degree, the temper characteristic of a narrow provincial sect. He has cherished and brooded over the antipathies with which he started, and, from time to time, has added new dislikes and taken up grudges against his old friends. He has not sufficient culture to understand fully the bearings of his own theories; and quarrels with those who should be his allies. He has another characteristic which, to my mind, is less pardonable. He is not only egotistical, which one may forgive, but there is something rather ungentlemanlike about his egotism. There is a rather offensive tone of self-assertion, thickly masked as self-depreciation. I should be slow to say that he was envious, for that is one of the accusations most easily made and least capable of being proved, against any one who takes an independent view of contemporary celebrities; but he has the tone of a man with a grievance; and the grievances are the shocks which his vanity has received from a want of general appreciation. There is something petty in the spirit which takes the world into its confidence upon such matters; and his want of reticence takes at times a more offensive form. He is one of the earliest "interviewers," and revenges himself upon men who have been more popular than himself by cutting portraits of them as they appeared to him. Altogether he is a man whom it is impossible to regard without a certain distrust; and that, as I fancy, is the true reason for his want of popularity. No literary skill will make average readers take kindly to a man who does not attract by some amiable quality.

In fact, some explanation is needed, for otherwise we could hardly account for the comparative neglect of some of the ablest essays in the language. We may be very fine fellows now, but we cannot write like Hazlitt, says a critic who is more likely than any one to falsify his own assertions. And when I take up one of Hazlitt's volumes of essays, I am very much inclined at times to agree with the assertion. They are apt, it is true, to leave a rather unpleasant flavour upon the palate. There is a certain acidity; a rather petulant putting forwards of little crotchets or personal dislikes; the arrogance belonging to all cliquishness is not softened into tacit assumption, but rather dashed in your face. But, putting this aside, the nervous vigour of the writing, the tone of strong conviction and passion which vibrates through his phrases, the genuine enthusiasm with which he celebrates the books and pictures which he really loves; the intense enjoyment of the beauties which he really comprehends, has in it something inspiring and contagious. There is at any rate nothing finicking or affected; if he is crotchety, he really believes in his crotchets; if he deals in paradoxes, it is not that he wishes to exhibit his skill, or to insinuate a claim to originality, but that he is a vehement and passionate believer in certain prejudices which have sunk into his mind or become ingrained in his nature. If every essayist is bound to be a dealer in commonplace or in the inverse commonplace which we call a paradox, Hazlitt succeeds in giving them an interest, by a new method. It is not that he is a man of ripened meditative wisdom who has thought over them and tested them for himself; nor a man of delicate sensibility from whose lips they come with the freshness of perfect simplicity; nor a man of strong sense, who tears away the conventional illusions by which we work ourselves into complacency; not a gentle humourist, who is playing with absurdities and appeals to us to share his enjoyable consciousness of his own nonsense; it is simply that he is a man of marked idiosyncrasy whose feelings are so strong, though confined within narrow channels, that his utterances have always the emphatic ring of true passion. When he talks about one of his favourites, whether Rousseau or Mrs. Inchbald, he has not perhaps much to add to the established criticisms, but he speaks as one who knows the book by heart, who has pored over it like a lover, come to it again and again, relished the little touches which escape the hasty reader, and in writing about it is reviving the old passionate gush of admiration. He cannot make such fine remarks as Lamb; and his judgments are still more personal and dependent upon the accidents of his early studies. But they stimulate still more strongly the illusion that one has only to turn to the original in order to enjoy a similar rapture. Lamb speaks as the epicure; and lets one know that one must be a man of taste to share his fine discrimination. But Hazlitt speaks of his old enjoyments as a traveller might speak of the gush of fresh water which saved him from dying of thirst in the wilderness. The delight seems so spontaneous and natural that

we fancy—very erroneously for the most part—that the spring must be as refreshing to our lips as it was to his. We are ashamed after it when we are bored by the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

There is the same kind of charm in the non-critical essays. We share for the moment Hazlitt's enthusiasm for the Indian jugglers, or for Cavanagh, the fives-player, whom he celebrates with an enthusiasm astonishing in pre-athletic days, and which could hardly be rivalled by a boyish idolator of Dr. Grace. We forget all our acquired prejudices to throw ourselves into the sport of the famous prize-fight between the gasman and Bill Neate; and see no incongruity between the pleasure of seeing one side of Mr. Hickman's face dashed into "a red ruin" by a single blow, and of taking a volume of Rousseau's sentimentalism in your pocket to solace the necessary hours of waiting.

It is the same, again, when Hazlitt comes to deal with the well-worn topics of commonplace essayists. He preaches upon threadbare texts, but they always have for him a strong personal interest. A commonplace maxim occurs to him, not to be calmly considered or to be ornamented with fresh illustrations, but as if it were incarnated in a flesh and blood representative, to be grappled, wrestled with, overthrown and trampled under foot. He talks about the conduct of life to his son, and begins with the proper aphorisms about industry, civility, and so forth, but as he warms to his work, he grows passionate and pours out his own prejudices with the energy of personal conviction. He talks about "effeminacy," about the "fear of death," about the "main chance," about "envy," about "egotism," about "success in life," about "depth and superficiality," and a dozen other equally unpromising subjects. We know too well what dreary and edifying meditations they would suggest to some popular essayists, and how prettily others might play with them. But nothing turns to platitude with Hazlitt; he is always idiosyncratic, racy, vigorous, and intensely eager, not so much to convince you, perhaps, as to get the better of you as presumably an antagonist. He does not address himself to the gentle reader of more popular writers, but to an imaginary opponent always ready to take up the gauntlet and to get the worst of it. Most people rather object to assuming that position, and to be pounded as if it were a matter of course that they were priggish adherents of some objectionable theory. But if you can take him for the nonce on his own terms and enjoy conversation which courts contradiction, you may be sure of a good bout in the intellectual ring. And even his paradoxes are more than mere wanton desire to dazzle. Read, for example, the characteristic essay upon *The Pleasure of Hating*, with its perverse vindication of infidelity to our old friends, and old books, and you feel that Hazlitt, though arguing himself for the moment into a conviction which he cannot seriously hold, has really given utterance to a genuine sentiment which is more impressive than many a volume of average reflection. A more frequent contrast of general sentiment might, indeed, be agreeable. And yet, in spite of the undertone of rather sullen

melancholy, we must be hard to please if we are not charmed with the occasional occurrence of such passages as these: "I remember once strolling along the margin of a stream, skirted with willows and flashing ridges, in one of those sequestered valleys on Salisbury plain, where the monks of former ages had planted chapels and built hermit's cells. There was a little parish church near, but tall elms and quivering alders hid it from my sight; when, all of a sudden, I was startled by the sound of a full organ pealing on the ear, accompanied by the rustic voices and the rolling quire of village maids and children. It rose, indeed, like an inhalation of rich distilled perfumes. The dew from a thousand pastures was gathered in its softness, the silence of a thousand years spoke in it. It came upon the heart like the calm beauty of death; fancy caught the sound and faith mounted on it to the skies. It filled the valley like a mist, and still poured out its endless chant, and still it swells upon the ear and wraps me in a golden trance, drowning the noisy tumult of the world."

If the spirit of clique were invariably productive of good essay-writing, we should never be in danger of any deficiency in our supplies. But our modern cliques are so anxious to be cosmopolitan, and on a level with the last new utterance of the accepted prophet, that somehow their disquisitions seem to be wanting in individual flavour. Perhaps we have unknown prophets amongst us whose works will be valued by our grandchildren. But I will not now venture upon the dangerous ground of contemporary criticism.

Némorosa.

I.

"A LANDSCAPE-PAINTER leads a merry life. He has the wide world for his studio and Nature herself for his mistress and model: a smiling mistress, a patient and silent model, whose caprices, however discouraging they may be, are never exasperating or senseless, like those of the human subject. He can count upon a kind welcome wherever he may roam, and it is seldom that he fails to meet with a joyous comrade or two. He has the sunshine and the free air and an abundance of exercise to keep him in health. He is independent, in a word, which is the secret of all true happiness. There you have the one side of the medal: the reverse is less glittering. Independence is a very fine thing; but it is a luxury, and, like other luxuries, has to be paid for. If the Salon looks coldly upon landscapes, and the public declines to buy them, your poor landscape-painter is in a fair way to become independent of all earthly requirements by means of the simple process of starvation. All things considered, I don't complain of my trade. You may say what you please about low forms of art; but what I maintain is that no form of art can be low, though every kind of artist can be easily enough. What do you make of Luca della Robbia, may I ask? And which do you think is the greater man—Bernard Palissy, or that ass Brouillon, who flatters himself that he is a modern Michel-Angelo, and has never produced a picture yet that has not been out of drawing? Low form of art indeed! Stuff, my good sir!"

Victor Berthon could claim some acquaintance with the subject upon which he descanted so fluently, having been himself a landscape-painter for a matter of eight years, and having reaped but a meagre result from his labours. So meagre, indeed, had it been that he had at last made up his mind to accept an offer which he had more than once rejected, and to bind himself to execute a certain number of studies annually for the manufactory of pottery at Montigny, which had become, and is becoming, more and more widely known to lovers of ceramic excellence. Nobody answered his questions or disputed the conclusiveness of his arguments, for the sufficient reason that nobody but himself heard them. He was wandering among the hills and glades of the forest of Fontainebleau, with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his loose velvet coat, and his pipe for his sole confidant; and in spite of the expostulatory tone of his soliloquy—which might have seemed to imply that the step which he had taken stood in some need of justification—there was a

good-humoured and contented smile about his eyes and lips such as might be expected to irradiate the countenance of one who saw his way to a clear seven hundred francs a month for the future.

"Pots and jugs and plates!" he mused. "There was a time when I should have thought it a very long way beneath me to paint such things; but there was a time when I was a young fool and mistook myself for a genius. At thirty, one has pretty nearly done with illusions."

Convinced of his wisdom pertaining to that advanced age, M. Berthon plunged more deeply into reflections and projects, and more deeply into the shady wilderness. He had no more fear of losing his way in the latter than in the former; for the locality had been known to him for many years past, as indeed it is to most French artists of his school. As, however, he had on all previous occasions fixed his headquarters at Barbison, and as Montigny happens to be situated at the opposite extremity of the forest, a good five miles away from that village, it was hardly surprising that, towards sundown, he should suddenly have awoke to the conviction that he had not the remotest idea of where he was.

The spot where he made this unpleasant discovery was an irregularly-shaped clearing where four grassy bridle-paths met; and while he was twisting his moustache in perplexity and wondering which of these was the most likely to lead him to his destination, he caught sight of something white flitting among the trees a hundred yards or so away; which something, approaching rapidly, developed itself into the tall figure of a girl. Swinging her straw hat in her hand, she was passing from light to shade with long, easy steps, and was evidently sure enough of her whereabouts to be independent of beaten tracks. Presently she emerged upon the open space, and then, for the first time becoming aware of the handsome young gentleman in the velvet coat and high-crowned wide-awake who was gazing at her with admiring eyes, stopped short, and looked him full in the face.

Victor Berthon's eyes had every right and reason to express admiration. This young wood-nymph, with her golden-brown hair, her blue eyes, and her slim, lithe form, would under any circumstances have been a specimen of humanity worth the looking at; but just now the accident of her slightly startled pose and the natural accessories of light and background combined to produce an effect especially delightful to the æsthetic soul. From the thicket at her back rose the straight trunks of some ancient Scotch firs, slate-coloured at their base and reddening towards their summit; a fiery ray of sunlight, falling aslant through the dense foliage overhead, caught her hair, and converted it into the semblance of a nimbus; her left hand, which held her hat, hung by her side, but her right was still uplifted, holding back a spray of the undergrowth through which she had come; and during the second or two that she stood thus, one of those bewildering recollections which come and go like a flash of lightning passed through the artist's mind. The memory, if such it had been, was dispelled by the movement of its subject, who

stepped forward, saying in a clear and pleasant voice, "Monsieur has probably missed his way?"

Victor took off his hat, and bowed low. "Mademoiselle, I am ashamed to say that I have; and if you will have the kindness to tell me towards which point of the compass Montigny lies——"

"Very willing, monsieur. I myself am going to Marlotte, so that our way is the same. You have only to follow me."

And, without wasting more words about it, she struck into the thick of the forest again, disdaining the paths that diverged on her right and left, and moving with such deft rapidity that to follow her was a behest more easily heard than obeyed.

Our friend Victor, however, was not the man to walk in dull silence behind a pretty girl when, by dint of hopping, skipping, and floundering, he could maintain an intermittent position by her side. This girl was not only pretty but mysterious; for, although her dress was that of the people, her air and accent seemed to belong to a somewhat higher station; and the attractions of beauty have never yet been lessened by a touch of mystery. Victor was determined to find out all about her; and, for that matter, she showed no disposition to baulk his curiosity. Her chief desire was to get over the ground as quickly as possible, being, as she presently confessed, in fear of reaching home too late for supper; but she answered without shyness or reticence the various hints and questions addressed to her by her breathless companion, and once or twice put a question on her own score. She herself was not at all out of breath.

"Monsieur is an artist," she remarked. But this was rather an assertion than an interrogation; and indeed M. Berthon's garb, his short pointed beard, and his long locks bewrayed him.

"Mademoiselle, I am a very humble member of the craft. I have often wished to be a great artist, but never more sincerely than I did a few minutes ago, when you were standing under the fir-trees yonder. It was a subject such as one does not come across every day. If I had the power to do justice to it, and if I could obtain your permission, I would paint you like that. It would be a short cut to immortality for us both." She laughed. "You would come too late for one of us, monsieur. I am immortal already."

Victor stared for a moment, and then struck his hands together. "Ah! now I have it! I was certain we had met before, though not in the flesh. You must be Némorosa."

"You have seen M. Royer's picture, then?"

"Of course, I have seen it; who has not? You were right to say that you are immortal; Royer will never paint the equal of that picture. And so you are the original Némorosa!" repeated Victor under his breath, with a sort of admiring awe.

"At your service, monsieur. And when I say at your service, I mean at your service, you understand. I am at the service of all artists; and, without flattering myself, I hardly know what some of

them would have done without me. They would have never seen our forest, that is certain. Since you have heard of me already, you will be aware that the forest belongs to me, in a manner of speaking. There is not a woodcutter from Chailly to Bourron, or from Archères to Bois-le-Roi, who knows it as I do. When you want to see the real forest—the forest as it used to be before they disfigured it with little winding paths, and sign-posts telling people which are the *parties artistiques* and at what points they ought to exclaim ‘Sublime!’—you need only go to the house of my aunt, Madame Vanne, at Marlotte—any one will show it to you—and ask for Marguerite. But perhaps,” she added, checking herself, “you have not heard of me by that name after all.”

“Can you suppose me so ignorant?” cried Victor reproachfully.

But, in truth, the young lady’s renown was less widely spread than she imagined, and had certainly not reached the ears of her present companion. Victor had indeed, as he had said, seen Royer’s celebrated picture, entitled “*Némorosa, Reine des Bois*,” and had understood that the nymph depicted therein was a tutelary deity of the forest of Fontainebleau, to whom some legend of the middle ages, which he could not recall at the moment, was attached. He had at once recognised in the fair Marguerite the original of that fabulous being; but up to the moment of that recognition he had neither heard of nor suspected the existence of such an original. This did not deter him from assuring Mdlle. Marguerite Vanne that his meeting with her was the un hoped-for fulfilment of a long-cherished dream, nor from accepting with warmest thanks her gracious offer of guidance. He was about to suggest a day and hour for the carrying of the same into effect when his leader cut him short by pointing to a broad white track dimly visible through the trees in the twilight. “There is the high road,” she said; “we part here. My way lies to the right, yours to the left. Good-night, monsieur.” And, with a wave of her hand, she was gone.

The little village of Marlotte, situated on the outskirts of the forest, shares with Barbison the patronage of Parisian landscape-painters. There, every evening during the summer season, a jovial assembly of bearded and oddly-costumed persons meets to enjoy a pipe and a glass after the labours of the day; and thither Victor Berthon, having disposed of his supper somewhat more hastily than was his wont, betook himself in the confident hope of obtaining a brotherly welcome, together with fuller particulars as to the past and present life of Mdlle. Vanne. If he was disappointed in either of these expectations, it was rather in the former than in the latter. To desert a hard and ungrateful mistress after years of constancy is an offence for which excuses may be found; but every one knows how difficult a matter it is to forgive a friend for coming into a fortune; and as such the modest revenue which Victor was now known to be earning appeared to many of his old comrades. His reception, therefore, when he entered the long room where these gentlemen were seated in conclave, was just a shade less cordial than it

would have been a twelvemonth before, and he had to listen to a few ironical congratulations upon his good luck and to some banter of a kind which might have tried the temper of a vain or touchy man. On the other hand, he heard all that there was to hear about Mdlle. Vanne in a quarter of an hour. As chance would have it, the great M. Royer himself—a good-humoured, grey-bearded veteran whom success had not wholly estranged from Bohemia—was sitting at the head of the table, presiding over the symposium; but even in his absence Victor would have had no trouble in gaining the required information. Everybody, it appeared, knew Némorosa; and indeed the inquirer was given to understand that she was of those whom not to know argues one's self unknown.

To arrive at an understanding of plain facts from the more or less irrelevant testimony of twenty voices demands some patience and attention; but, as the result of it all, Victor managed to gather that his wood-nymph was an orphan; that her relations belonged to the well-to-do peasant class; that her father had become a promising artist and had died young, leaving her a small independence; that she now lived with her aunt, la Mère Vanne, who sold poultry and eggs at the Fontainebleau market; that she had all her life been allowed to come and go as she chose among the mazes of her beloved forest; and that she enjoyed an undisputed right to be regarded as the guardian angel of all artists who plied their trade therein—especially of such as lodged at Marlotte.

Thus much he had learnt when the door opened, and Mdlle. Vanne herself walked in. Victor was surprised and a little disappointed. The place, the hour, and the company were alike unsuitable, he thought, for the apparition of young women. This young woman, however, evidently held a different opinion. Without any appearance of embarrassment, she nodded smilingly at the company, saying, "Bon soir, messieurs," and receiving a general "Bon soir, Némorosa" in reply; and then, making her way to the end of the table, seated herself upon the arm of M. Royer's chair, and began talking to him in an undertone. Presently she raised her voice, and, pointing to Victor—

"I found monsieur wandering about the forest, like a lost sheep, this evening," said she; "and he knew me almost immediately. You see, Père Royer, that one is famous beyond the limits of one's own village."

"Do not flatter yourself, my child. On the contrary, M. Berthon has just been asking us who you are."

"He has been asking who Marguerite Vanne is, you mean: that is possible. But he knew Némorosa, and admitted that she was immortal. He admitted it a little reluctantly even; for he had the kindness to say that he would have liked to immortalise me himself."

A unanimous shout of laughter greeted this announcement. "Upon a milk-jug?" asked one satirist, "or upon a flower-pot? Can't you see the public of the year 3,000 gazing reverently at a specimen of *barbotine* signed by the illustrious Berthon? Subject—meeting of Némorosa and the artist."

A fire of similar pleasantries fell from all sides upon poor Victor, who bore it philosophically enough. But Marguerite was pleased to take up the cudgels on his behalf.

"I always thought," said she, "that an artist might use any material that came to his hand. The old Italian masters worked upon the walls of houses; and did not Raphael paint one of his finest pictures upon the top of a cask?"

"Come, come! you are not going to compare a fresco to the blurred outlines of a bit of *barbotine*, I hope. I say nothing against *barbotine*: it is pretty, the colours are not bad, and it has a good glaze; but that kind of thing is not art. No, no, my dear Némorosa; you may be thankful that your chance of going down to posterity does not rest with the manufacture of Montigny ware. If such articles were to last for ever, what would become of trade? Pots and pans are made to be broken."

"And the varnish on the canvas cracks," said M. Royer, "and the colours fade; and so do youth and fame, and the roses on the cheeks of girls who sit up too late. Go to bed, my child—you ought to have been there an hour ago—and tell Madame Vanne that if she can spare her donkey to carry my tent and easel a mile or two to-morrow afternoon, I shall be much indebted to her. Now be off!"

Marguerite shrugged her shoulders, and pouted a little. "Any one who heard you would think I was a baby!" she cried. Nevertheless, she slid off the arm of M. Royer's chair obediently, and, with a sweeping reverence to the company, vanished.

A few minutes later Victor Berthon followed her example. He was lighting his pipe on the doorstep, preparatory to making a start homewards, when one of the young fellows who had been sitting near him thought proper to slip out after him and catch him by the sleeve.

"Listen, my good Victor," said he. I saw you looking at Némorosa in an odd way just now, when she was perched up beside old Royer there. Ah, *vieux farceur*! I know you. You were asking yourself what all that meant, eh? Well; it meant nothing at all. Old Royer treats her as a child. He has known her since she was eight years old, and he forgets that she is now eighteen. The rest of us forget it too. I don't know whether she always forgets it herself or not; but that is not the question. There are a score of us here who consider her as our sister; and if it should enter into the head of any handsome young painter upon pottery to permit himself impertinences in that quarter—you understand?"

"The devil fly away with you fellows!" shouted Victor. "Who is thinking of being impertinent to your Némorosa? I don't care if I never see her again in my life. Do you think I am such a fool as to confound Mdlle. Vanne with one of the young ladies whom one commonly meets in your society? You have sworn to make me lose my temper to-night among you."

"And it seems that we have succeeded at last," remarked the other drily. "My poor friend, you have fallen in love with Némorosa; there is no doubt about it."

M. Berthon deigned no reply to this absurd accusation, and strode away without so much as saying "Good night." Perhaps it was an absurd accusation; perhaps he was not in love with this picturesque peasant-girl; perhaps her championship of ceramic artists had not sent a thrill of pleasure through him; perhaps he had not felt ridiculously jealous of M. Royer, who was old enough to be the girl's grandfather; and perhaps, as he had averred, he did not care if he never saw her again in his life. It all came to much the same thing in the long run; for before ten days were past, Victor Berthon had gone so far as to say to himself that he would either marry Marguerite Vanne or remain for ever single. The very form of this asseveration was a sufficient testimony to the seriousness of his attachment; for though Victor was not without experience of the tender passion, he had never before contemplated even the distant eventuality of marriage. But the possession of a settled income is apt to subvert a man's whole views of life and its contingencies; and a few excursions into the heart of the forest under Némorosa's guidance, a few studies from nature, dashed off while she glanced over his shoulder, a chance meeting or two, and sundry brief interviews on Madame Vanne's doorstep in the starlight had done the rest. The young artist's mind was made up; and, although he did not communicate his intentions to anybody, he had the entire little society of Marlotte for his confidant. M. Royer knew all about it, and approved of it; as did also Madame Vanne, a hard-headed, soft-hearted old person, who, after making certain preliminary inquiries at Montigny and elsewhere, became a warm supporter of the pleasant young fellow who had without much difficulty wormed himself into her good graces. As for the confraternity of artists, they had been in possession of this open secret from the outset, and, being good-natured fellows in the main, they did not chaff their comrade more than was fair and reasonable under the circumstances, while in the presence of Némorosa nothing could exceed their respectful unconsciousness of the destiny that appeared to be in store for her. Poor innocent! poor little angel!—they contemplated her from that essentially French standpoint which will have it that every woman must either be a saint or a very unequivocal kind of sinner, and they watched the unfolding blossom of her life with the tender, sentimental, and half-regretful interest which such spectacles have the privilege of arousing. It was a pretty little idyl that they were looking on at—a pretty little leisurely idyl, played under the greenwood tree to the accompaniment of rustling leaves and cooing doves and the echoing strokes of the woodman's axe and the far-away sound of human voices and laughter in rocky dells and shady lanes. Victor took things easily, not hurrying the progress of his courtship, and they were grateful to him for his forbearance. At the end of the fine season, doubtless, there

would be a wedding, and Marguerite Vanne would become Marguerite Berthon, and Némorosa would never be Némorosa again. It was a pity, but it was the way of the world, and Berthon seemed likely to prove as good a husband as another. Such was the view of these excellent and sympathetic gentlemen, with whom it was an article of faith that one of the principal persons concerned must be ignorant of what was obvious to everybody else, and that Némorosa, if not fancy-free, must, at all events, imagine herself to be so.

As a matter of fact, she was just as well aware of the state of affairs as any of them; and, indeed, the number of women whom an offer of marriage—even though it be a first one—has taken by surprise, is probably inconsiderable. What answer Marguerite intended to make when M. Berthon should have declared himself, she was not equally certain. Victor was not the ideal whom she had dimly seen in her long solitary walks and in the half-formed visions of her dreamy, happy life. Yet she liked to think that he cared for her: his attentions gave her pleasure, and she had a feeling towards him which might easily have ripened into love, and very likely would have done so if nothing had occurred to prevent it. In which case there is every reason to believe that she would have lived blissfully and uneventfully ever afterwards, and that her story would not now be in course of narration.

The love of solitude, which is shared in a greater or less degree by all lovers of Nature, was especially strong in Marguerite, and there were days—very blank days for Monsieur Victor—when she felt an impulse, amounting to a necessity, to escape from her friends and her admirers into the woods, and to spend long hours in roaming hither and thither, without purpose, taking no count of time, and exulting in the liberty which was hers now, and which, as she already began to suspect, might not be hers always. Now it came to pass that, one cloudless summer morning, she wandered forth, spurred by this irresistible longing, and fate or chance led her at length to the so-called *Rocher des Demoiselles*, a long ridge of the yellowish-coloured sandstone rock in which the forest of Fontainebleau abounds, and which gives it its distinctive character. These miniature mountain ranges, separated from one another by deep valleys, intersected by gorges, overgrown with juniper bushes and broom, heath and heather, and crowned generally by a chaos of huge boulders, offer points of view too striking and beautiful to be neglected by the tourist and those who minister to his wants. They are for the most part approachable by means of the footpaths and sign-posts which Némorosa had denounced, and it was seldom that she cared to visit any of them. But the *Rocher des Demoiselles*, being remote from Fontainebleau, is less frequented than other picturesque spots of a similar kind; and it was with a comfortable conviction that she ran no immediate risk of being disturbed that our heroine, having climbed its rocky flank, threw her arms over the top of a great block of sandstone, and, resting her chin upon them, gazed at the expanse of green woodland which

stretched away from her in line after line of swelling hills into the far blue distance. Presently, though, she was startled by a very unusual sound—the clattering and sliding of a horse's hoofs upon the stony path; and before she had decided whether to yield to curiosity or to her desire for privacy, there emerged from round the shoulder of a hill not two hundred yards off an equestrian whose horse, with cocked ears and rigid fore-legs, appeared to be mutely protesting to the best of his power against being taken into places obviously unfitted for quadrupeds with iron shoes upon their feet.

Ah! this time it was no merry, commonplace Victor Berthon who was approaching our nymph of the woods. The new comer was a tall, spare man, not very young, yet hardly middle-aged, with finely-cut, aristocratic features and weary-looking blue eyes, who sat his horse, even under those uncomfortable circumstances, with a certain easy grace, and whose whole bearing breathed of distinction, not unmingled with dignified melancholy. It was, in short, the Ideal himself, *in propria persona*; and I think even that Némorosa must have been warned by some intuition of his identity at the first glance; for, instead of accosting him with innocent boldness, as it would have been in accordance with her usage to do, she blushed a little, and dropped her eyelids, drawing back close against the rock to let him pass. But he did not pass. He looked at her, dismounted, and, passing his arm through his horse's bridle-rein, advanced a few steps.

"You need not be afraid of my horse, mademoiselle," said he. "He is too much alarmed himself to think of hurting anybody."

"I am not afraid, monsieur," answered Marguerite, without raising her eyes.

Still the stranger did not move. After a brief interval of silence, Marguerite heard him murmur, as if thinking aloud, "This was well worth a scramble. I never saw anything more lovely."

Then, at last, she looked up, and saw that his blue eyes were opened wide, and that the bored look had left them, giving place to a light of surprise and admiration which she well knew had not been evoked by the beauty of the surrounding scenery alone. Nevertheless, she said, a little hurriedly:—

"This is not counted at all the finest view in the forest." And then, "You ought not to ride here; it is dangerous."

"Perhaps so," answered the stranger meaningly. There was another pause, after which, he resumed, in a lighter tone, "Ah; you mean that I may chance to break my neck. Very possibly; but that would be no great misfortune either to me or to any one else."

This was exactly the sort of speech which the Ideal would be quite sure to make. Marguerite scrutinised him with quickened interest; nor was he slow to return the compliment. The next thing that he said was:—

"Pardon me, mademoiselle; but, unless I am mistaken, I have the

honour to find myself in the presence of a celebrity. Are you not she whom they call Némorosa, *Reine des Bois*?"

He was better informed than Victor Berthon had been: it was Marguerite herself, not M. Royer's model, whom he had recognised. This ought to have gratified her vanity; but his question had been accompanied by a faint smile which irritated her, and for the first time her *sobriquet* struck her as ridiculous.

"Some of the young artists at Marlotte have chosen to call me so," she answered. "It is a silly name."

"It is a very pretty name, at all events, and, I have no doubt, an appropriate one. I have only lately arrived in these parts, which must be my excuse for being ignorant of the legend of your prototype. There is a legend, is there not? Would it be asking too much of your kindness to beg you to relate it to me?"

Marguerite, who knew every myth and chronicle connected with her dear forest, had told this one scores of times. She had in general a very graphic and effective method of narration; but upon the present occasion it must be confessed that she did no justice at all to her capabilities.

"Oh, do you not know it?" she said. "It is hardly worth learning. Long ago there was a certain knight, named René de Fontainebleau, who vowed eternal constancy to the memory of one Délia, who had died of the bite of a viper in the forest. Every day he used to come to the foot of the rock where she had met her death, and lament there for hours together. But one morning the nymph Némorosa appeared to him as he was lying weeping on the ground, and after he had seen her he could think no more of Délia. The nymph appeared to him again and again, and for a time he kept his vow, and would not look at her or speak to her; but at last he could resist no longer, and fell on his knees and confessed his love. So the nymph got possession of him, and after that he was never seen nor heard of again. That is all." She added, with much gravity, "These are only fables to amuse children with; there is no truth in them."

"Who knows? In any case, I pardon poor René's infidelity. If Némorosa at all resembled——" Here the speaker indulged in a telling aposiopesis. "Very likely," he resumed, "René honestly believed that he loved Délia until he met the other, and then he found out that he had made a mistake—*voilà*! These mistakes are occurring every day, without any intervention on the part of wood-nymphs. Happy those who discover them in time to repair them!"

The modern Némorosa made no rejoinder. Perhaps she was thinking that she herself had been upon the verge of making a fatal mistake. During the above colloquy, she and her interlocutor had been moving forward slowly and half-unconsciously, and were now standing on the westernmost extremity of the ridge. The ground fell away from their feet in a succession of sharp precipices, and further progress was impos-

sible. All of a sudden it occurred to Marguerite that she had no business to be loitering so long in the company of a gentleman with whom she was totally unacquainted. It was the very first time in her life that such a notion had crossed her mind, and it afflicted her with a novel sense of embarrassment.

"I must be going," she said abruptly. "Good day, monsieur."

But he entreated her not to hurry away. It was so seldom, he said, that he had the good fortune to meet with one who, like himself, loved the rocks and the trees and the free air of heaven. In his world no one cared for such things. For his own part, he found in them his sole consolation. So Marguerite lingered awhile and listened to his talk, which, in truth, did not lack a certain pathetic charm. She would have liked to hear a little more about his world, and what people did care for there, and of what it was that he required to be consoled; but he did not touch upon these topics. He confined himself to dilating upon the solace of communion with Nature and to eulogising the forest of Fontainebleau, being perhaps aware that a compliment to the forest would be looked upon as a personal compliment by his auditor. He declared his intention of exploring it to its inmost recesses. "I must visit the Rocher de Némorosa," he concluded with a smile. "Ah, how happy I should be if I could induce you to act as my guide to the spot!"

The girl looked troubled for an instant, but recovered her self-possession immediately. "No guide is wanted," she answered, rather coldly. "It is close to Fontainebleau, and only a few yards from the high road. Anybody can show you the place."

"But only you can show me the nymph," he returned.

"Good day, monsieur."

"Good day, mademoiselle. I have been too presumptuous, I see, and I must pay my vow at the shrine of Némorosa alone. I shall go there on Thursday next, about this hour, and I shall try to fancy myself the Chevalier René. It is unlucky that I am not provided with a Délia, but, as I am to have no Némorosa, perhaps that will not matter so much."

Marguerite sped back to Marlotte without drawing breath. She said nothing to anybody about the events of the afternoon, nor was she questioned upon the subject. Her periodical disappearances were too much a matter of course to excite comment, and if she was a trifle absent and silent during the evening, that also was nothing new. But, as she lay in bed that night, she made up her mind finally and decisively that she could not marry Victor Berthon. Of course her encounter with the stranger had nothing to do with this determination; though it is just possible that what he had said about fatal mistakes may have had some influence upon her. As for the stranger himself, she was not sure that she liked him at all. He was mysterious and interesting; but she was inclined to think that he had not been far wrong in calling himself too presumptuous, and it had been rather impertinent in him to specify in

such a marked manner the day and hour at which he proposed to visit Némorosa's rock. It almost sounded as if he expected that she would be upon the spot to receive him. But in all probability he would not go at all. Anyhow, if he did, he should not find her waiting for him.

And then, when the Thursday came, she went, and met him there.

II.

In the height of a glorious month of August, when the leafy retreats of the forest were at their loveliest, and the resinous fragrance of the pines filled the air on dewy mornings, and the cool evening breezes on the high lands were like draughts of life—when lazy artists, lying supine at noonday, smoked pipe after pipe, gazing sleepily up at the green canopy overhead and swearing that it was too hot to think of work—when Madame Vanne, proudly surveying her orchard and kitchen-garden, predicted such a fruit year as had never been known; and when all the world was rejoicing in mere existence, Victor Berthon was a thoroughly unhappy man. He could not give himself any definite reason for his unhappiness; and that made it all the worse. He was an object of ill-concealed envy to all his friends; Némorosa was as kind to him as she had ever been—perhaps, if anything, a shade kinder; he met her constantly; there were merry evenings at Marlotte and joyous little *al fresco* luncheon-parties in the woods; and all seemed to be going as smoothly as could be; but, for all that, he knew very well that something was amiss. His lover's instinct told him that Marguerite did not love him; and, if it had not seemed impossible, he would almost have fancied that he had a rival. What ailed the girl that she was in wild spirits at one moment and plunged in a melancholy day-dream the next? He could not flatter himself that these significant symptoms were in any way connected with his own presence. Once or twice it had occurred to him to wonder whether she was always alone during those protracted rambles which had latterly become of somewhat more frequent occurrence; but he put this suspicion away from him with a feeling of shame, declaring to himself that Marguerite was incapable of duplicity.

In truth the suspicion was only too well founded; and yet the girl was not intentionally deceitful. She was very sorry for Victor, and would gladly have made him understand that his suit was hopeless; but how is one to answer a question that has never been put? Of a deceit which most people would have counted far more heinous—namely, that she had omitted to inform her worthy old aunt that she was in the habit of continually meeting, in the forest, a gentleman of a rank evidently much above her own—her conscience did not accuse her. She had always been reserved, always been allowed to go her own way, and to speak or hold her peace as she pleased. Besides, there was nothing to tell. She made no appointments with the unknown; only, somehow or other, she was for ever coming across him; and she was too little acquainted with the

world and its ways to see any harm in that. She had never cared to ask him his name; when she thought of him she called him René, and he was her Ideal; and he talked to her as no one had ever talked before; and in the depths of her heart she knew, or thought she knew, that he loved her; and in a still deeper depth she was aware that she loved him. It was all utterly vague—much too vague for the question of difference of rank to have disturbed her.

Thus it was that Victor Berthon was uneasy, without knowing why, and jealous of he knew not what; and it was really in some sense a godsend to him when a palpable object of jealousy presented itself. It chanced on a sultry afternoon that some errand took Marguerite to Montigny, where Victor met her; and the two were standing talking by the dusty wayside when suddenly a brilliant apparition, in the shape of an officer of hussars, flashed upon them. This officer was young and good-looking and had a fine black moustache, and the blue and scarlet and silver of his uniform became him admirably, and he was mounted upon an Arab charger with a curved neck and a beautiful long tail, and was altogether the sort of person whom a civilian in a shabby coat might reasonably regard with suspicion. Greatly to Victor's disgust, the new comer drew rein in front of the couple by the roadside, and, raising his cap, inquired, with an insinuating smile, whether this were the village of Montigny-sur-Loing. On receiving an affirmative reply, he pursued, smiling more insinuatingly than ever, "Perhaps mademoiselle would have the extreme kindness to point out to me the situation of the manufactory of pottery?"

There is nothing like these hussars for impudence. What business had the fellow to address himself to a lady, when there was a man standing by, ready to give him any reasonable information of which he might be in need? It was already annoying enough that such a liberty should have been taken; but what was a great deal worse was that Marguerite should step forward with positive alacrity, and answer, "Certainly, monsieur; it is but a few minutes' walk from here. I will show you the way."

Off she started, without so much as a glance at her lover. The hussar rode beside her, bending down to talk to her as they went; and soon a turn in the road hid them from sight.

At first Victor felt that it would be inconsistent with his dignity to follow them; but when ten minutes had elapsed, and Marguerite did not reappear, anxiety got the upper hand of pride, and he strolled down the road, with his hands in his pockets, thinking bitter things of the whole female sex.

The manufactory consists of a few unpretending buildings, grouped together among the willows and alders that flank the sluggish Loing. In one of these there is a small show-room, where specimens of the art-produce of the place are displayed for the benefit of casual visitors; and, pausing before the open door of this ante-chamber, Victor could hear the

voices of the proprietor, the hussar, and Marguerite engaged in animated conversation within. A little boy was leading the Arab charger up and down in the shade. While Victor was hesitating whether to enter or not, a showy, open carriage dashed up, in which sat a very fashionably-attired lady. At the sound of the wheels the officer came out hastily, and was greeted by a nonchalant, "Ah, M. de Chaulnes, is that you?" After which, the two went into the house together, and Victor lighted a cigarette and waited outside for Marguerite to emerge.

She emerged, after a time, with the others; and the proprietor, catching sight of Victor, cried, "Ah! here, madame, is precisely one of my best artists, M. Berthon."

The lady bowed graciously, and said some pretty things, which failed to restore M. Berthon to good humour. It was not pleasant to be exhibited in that fashion, as though he were a tailor's foreman, and he threw an angry glance at his employer. But that worthy man was devoid of all fine feeling. He went on with a shrug of his shoulders:—

"These gentlemen give me a great deal of trouble, madame. I have to pay them very highly, and they work when it is their good pleasure. What would you have? I should do a better business with inferior workmen; but when I started I promised myself to produce nothing second-rate."

"Oh!" answered the lady politely, "we all know that genius must be left free, and that inspiration does not come to order. It would be too much presumption to dictate to an artist; but if I were M. Berthon, I know where I should turn for my next subject. There," she continued, pointing to Marguerite, who was leaning against the door-post, twisting between her fingers a spray of the climbing vine that covered the wall—a tall, white figure, half in shadow, half in sunlight—"there is a picture ready made."

Having thus made herself agreeable all round, this urbane personage got into her carriage and was driven away, the hussar riding beside her. She had left her name and address—the Comtesse de Valmy, Fontainebleau—and, as her purchases had not been less extensive than her manners had been charming, she left a highly favourable impression behind her into the bargain. Even Victor allowed that the woman had a pleasant way with her.

As for the young officer of hussars, that was another matter. When Marguerite went home that night, she descried a group of artists, gathered in front of the little inn at Marlotte, laughing heartily over a sheet of drawing-paper which Victor was holding up for their inspection, and, approaching to see what might be the cause of their merriment, she beheld a rough sketch representing a cavalry officer, with a gigantic moustache and a sabre as big as himself, astride upon an animal which much resembled a rocking-horse.

"It is De Chaulnes to the life!" cried one of the young men, whose rank and fortune were somewhat above those of his fellows, and who was

understood to mix freely in the most distinguished Parisian circles. "If I were you, Berthon, I would not make him a present of that likeness. De Chaulnes, you see, is a man who appreciates himself at his full value."

"That I can quite believe," remarked Victor sardonically.

"Yes; and he is capable of eating you up, body and bones, if you permit yourself to laugh at him."

"Perhaps I might stick in his throat. Mademoiselle, I am sorry to see, has not a word of praise for my poor effort."

"I do not like caricatures," answered Marguerite coldly, turning away. "There is nothing funny in this one; and anybody can be ill-natured."

So Victor returned to Montigny in the sulks, and did not honour the customary symposium with his company that evening.

Marguerite, however, was present at it for a short time. She came ostensibly to ask whether M. Royer had returned from Paris, but in reality to make her peace with Victor, to whom she felt that she had been rude and unkind. Not finding him there, she lingered awhile in the hope that he might yet appear; and, by way of passing the time, she related the incident of Madame de Valmy's visit to Montigny. Did anybody know the lady? she inquired.

The young man who had so promptly recognised the portrait of M. de Chaulnes nodded two or three times significantly, and laughed a little. "I know her," he said; and his tone appeared to imply that what he knew of her was not greatly to her advantage. "Somebody told me, the other day, that she was spending the summer at Fontainebleau," he continued, "and I wondered what in the world could have brought her to such a sleepy place. But some people are clever enough to find amusement anywhere; and she is fond of amusing herself, that dear Countess. So she happened to meet De Chaulnes at Montigny, did she? His regiment has just been ordered to Fontainebleau, I hear."

"Come, Ravillier, none of your scandalous stories," broke in his neighbour warningly. For it must be recorded to the credit of these young gentlemen that they kept a very strict watch over their tongues in the presence of Némorosa.

"My dear fellow, I am not telling scandalous stories. Madame de Valmy is not scandalous; far from it. She is discretion itself—after a certain point. Her husband is scandalous, if you like. They say he made the poor Countess shed some bitter tears during the first year of their marriage; but she dried them long ago, or somebody dried them for her. Anyhow, they have ceased to flow. Nowadays it is she who goes about the world smiling, and he who wears a dismal countenance. Everybody is very sorry for him—particularly the ladies. To look at him, with his haggard face and half-shut eyes, you would say he was the picture of an injured and heart-broken husband. That is his rôle, I believe. It is very amusing."

"Is M. de Valmy also at Fontainebleau?" asked Marguerite suddenly.

"I believe so. You will know him at once, if you meet him. A tall, thin man, slightly bald, with a fair complexion and dull, blueish-coloured eyes, who looks as if he hardly thought it worth while to go on living much longer. I think, mademoiselle," added this sapient youth hesitatingly, "that if you should meet him, and if he should speak to you (as he probably would), you would do just as well not to answer him."

The advice was doubtless excellent; but it partook of the nature of good advice generally in being of very little practical service. For, alas! M. de Valmy had already spoken, and had been answered at considerable length.

Marguerite escaped from the room somehow—how she hardly knew—without betraying her secret, and, hurrying home, threw herself, face downwards, upon her bed, dazed and sickened by the blow which had fallen upon her. She had never known pain, mental or physical, in her life before, and it affected her with something of the surprise and anger which wild creatures feel when they are wounded. It was not with M. de Valmy that she was angry; she kept repeating this to herself as she lay there, dry-eyed and motionless, through the long night hours. He had never spoken to her of love, much less of marriage: she herself had scarcely thought of their intimacy in that way until now. It was not by him, but by her own insensate folly, that she had been deceived; and there might have been a sort of miserable consolation in this view, if it had been really heartfelt. But in truth M. de Valmy, if he had not said much, had given a great deal to be understood; and, whatever protestations Marguerite might make to herself, she knew with the crumbling of her happiness her idol too had fallen to pieces. All was lost; it only remained for her to die. So she murmured again and again, with the impatience and ignorance natural to her age.

The first peep of dawn saw her stealing out of the house and down the village street into the glades of the forest. She would be expected to keep one of those unspoken trysts to which allusion has been made, at eleven o'clock, on the heights of La Solle, some four miles away; and she resolved that, for this last time, she would be true to it. Wandering up hill and down dale, straying through many devious ways, and pausing often, with a vain and painful effort to shape the chaos of her mind into some clear purpose, she yet reached the appointed spot long before the appointed time; and, having reached it, seated herself upon a rock, and waited without impatience. Who ever yet wished to hasten the hour of his execution? It may even have been that Marguerite, like many of those appointed to die, may have had a vague fancy that all was not over, since the end had not come, and may have hoped against hope for some impossible reprieve.

She sat, with one knee drawn up and her hands clasped round it,

gazing in a sort of melancholy bewilderment at the familiar prospect before her. Beneath her was the sandy footpath, twisting and turning through a labyrinth of rocks and broken ground, which they call the *Chemin des Artistes*; beyond lay the broad *Vallée de la Solle*, with its old beech trees overshadowing a thick growth of bracken and broom; and beyond that again rose wooded hills bathed in the sunny mists of morning. In the far distance somebody was blowing a French horn, the blasts of which were echoed and re-echoed through the still air. Nature was cruel, and showed no sympathy with one of her most ardent votaries; the forest, like the banks and braes of the bonny Doon, persisted in looking its fairest, though Némorosa's heart was breaking.

At length the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps was audible: he was coming! Marguerite did not stir. She remained motionless while he drew nearer and nearer; she waited till he was close to her, till his shadow fell upon her, till he touched her shoulder; and then (for she had prepared herself for this moment, and knew what she had to do) she rose to her full height, and, looking him straight in the eyes, said, "Good morning, M. de Valmy."

Well; it was a failure. He did not start, nor turn pale, nor turn red, nor stagger back, striking his forehead, with a gesture of dismay. He did none of these things; he only looked a trifle put out, and said, "So some busybody has told you my name. I am sorry for it. I would rather have been only René to you."

"I never called you René!" exclaimed Marguerite indignantly.

"Did you not? I fancied—— but no doubt it was only fancy. I hope you will always call me René in future."

This was so utterly unlike what Marguerite had anticipated that all her premeditated speeches went out of her head, and she remained silent for a few minutes. Then she said, with simple directness:—

"I shall not need to call you by one name or another in future. I shall not see you any more after to-day. It is not right."

"Not right?" he echoed, looking dreamily away from her across the blue mists of the valley; "who knows what is right? The priest has one definition, the law has another, society has a third. For my own part, it seems to me that whatever is beautiful, whatever lifts us above the pettiness of daily life, must be right."

"You make things very hard for me," cried Marguerite with an impatient shake of the shoulders; "you make me say what I do not like to say. I know it cannot be right for me to meet you as I have been doing, and—and—I don't think Madame de Valmy would approve of it."

He turned and looked at her with a smile and a frown. "Some one has been putting notions into your head. You talk like a little *bourgeoise*, not like Némorosa, *Reine des Bois*."

"And you talk like—like M. de Valmy, I suppose. I am not Némorosa; I am only Marguerite Vanne, the granddaughter of a peasant

who would touch his cap to you and call you 'Monsieur le Comte' if he were still living. But that is nothing. It is not because you are so far above me in rank that I should be afraid to walk and talk with you, but because——"

"Well? because?"

"Because—of your wife," answered Marguerite, blushing suddenly all over her face and neck, and lowering her eyes.

"My wife!" he repeated with bitter contempt; "oh, my wife! Listen, Marguerite: if you would know anything about my wife you would know that she is a woman of whom all Paris talks with a peculiar kind of smile. I do not wish to speak of her. All I will say is that I owe her nothing. My life is as miserable a one as can well be; but since I have known you and loved you—yes, loved you; it cannot surely be any surprise to you to hear me say that—it has had more brightness than I thought it could ever have again. Do not refuse me a few happy hours. I shall only be in Fontainebleau for another month or two, and all I implore is to be allowed to see you sometimes. That is not very much to ask."

The astounding selfishness of this speech failed to strike Marguerite as it might have done a less partial hearer; but she shook her head. "We must part," she said.

M. de Valmy's eyes flashed. "I will not part from you!" he exclaimed passionately. "I love you; I know—no, do not deny it; it would be useless—I know that you love me. What are conventional ties to us? Can we not agree to forget for a few sunny afternoons that I am a slave?"

"Ah!" she cried, "now you insult me!"

And without waiting to hear more, without a word or a sign of farewell, she turned from him and fled.

He followed her, calling out "Marguerite! Marguerite!" She heard him crashing heavily after her through the thickets which she threaded with the agility of a hare; but she never turned her head, and he soon abandoned the chase. Truth to tell, he was neither as young nor as active as he had once been; moreover, he had a strong sense of the ridiculous—a strong sense, that is, of the unpleasantness of appearing ridiculous—so he let her go.

Marguerite knew that she was safe, but that did not prevent her from running on at the top of her speed for a couple of miles or more. She was close to Fontainebleau when her progress was arrested by the sound of voices in the immediate neighbourhood. She advanced cautiously a few paces to the edge of one of those grassy *carrefours* which are dotted at intervals all over the forest, and which form the meeting point of many tracks. Leaning against the pedestal of the iron cross which stood in the centre of this space was a lady who strongly resembled an illustration from the *Journal des Modes*, and by her side was a gentleman in hussar uniform. Their backs were turned to the intruder,

otherwise the gentleman would hardly have been kissing the lady's hand with so much fervour. The latter responded by playfully beating him on the shoulder with her parasol; and Marguerite heard her say, "Enough like that, M. de Chaulnes! You know that nothing wearies me so much as a scene from a comedy in five acts; and my coachman, who is abominably intelligent, will be asking himself what has become of me. You may dine with us to-day if you like; but do not come too early, or we shall be yawning in one another's faces before the evening is over."

She moved off at a leisurely pace, her parasol over her shoulder, and her long train sweeping the ground; and ere long a carriage was heard rolling away along the high road. Then De Chaulnes turned round, and became aware of Marguerite. For an instant he looked excessively foolish; but, as he was blessed with plenty of *aplomb* and presence of mind, he soon recovered himself, and taking off his cap, with a fascinating smile, wished mademoiselle good morning. Was she walking towards Fontainebleau? Yes! So much the better, for he was himself going in that direction.

The incident of which Marguerite had just been an unintentional witness had not been altogether displeasing to her. She wanted to think well of the man whom she loved, and in her haste to make excuses for him she could not help rejoicing a little in any proof of his wife's treachery. For M. de Chaulnes' company she was by no means anxious; but, although common sense told her that De Valmy must be far away, she was haunted by a nervous dread that he might reappear at any moment. Therefore she willingly accepted the hussar's proffered escort. And this was an unfortunate thing for the peace of poor Victor Berthon, who happened to be strolling up the slopes above the town, with his portfolio under his arm, in quest of sylvan subjects, and who, desecrating the couple from afar, saw his direst suspicions confirmed, and made up his mind there and then that he would never more believe in the honesty or innocence of woman.

That afternoon Madame Vanne received a shock which, to use her own expression, "turned her blood in her veins." Her niece, without assigning any reason for such a step, quietly announced that she intended to go away for the remainder of the summer.

"To go away?" cried the old woman in amazement; "what is the child talking about? To go away where, if you please?"

"I shall go to my cousins at the restaurant at Franchard," Marguerite answered. "I know they have a spare room, and they will be glad to have me with them."

"Eh? I would not be too sure of that. And in the very middle of the busy season too. You know what Pierre Vanne is, and his wife is one of the same sort; they would never understand your ways. Life for them means work, and hard work, and plenty of it. They would not be very well pleased to have a guest just now, unless she came to lend them a hand."

"That is just what I mean to do. I want work ; I am tired of being idle and useless."

"Stay where you are then, foolish child. If you want work there is enough of it to be had in Marlotte ; and you need not seek for it any farther away than this house either."

"But I want to leave Marlotte for a time."

"Aha ! is that it ?" Madame Vanne thought she began to see daylight, and assumed an exceedingly knowing air. "You want to get away from somebody, is it not so ? But what has he been doing then, that poor young man ? Nothing very unpardonable, I am sure. He came here this morning to ask for you, looking as ashamed of himself as if he had stolen half a dozen of my chickens, and I would wager that he brought an apology with him. Come, it wants but a word to set these little misunderstandings right ; and between ourselves, *ma petite*, M. Victor Berthon——"

"There is no question of M. Berthon," interrupted Marguerite. "There never will be any question of him in the way that you mean ; and I have not quarrelled with him at all."

"I was going to say that M. Victor Berthon is a man whom any girl might think herself fortunate to have at her feet. He will be a husband of the good sort. I do not speak of his position or his prospects—though these are good things not to be despised—but of his disposition. I have lived sixty years in the world, keeping my eyes open all the time, and it would not be easy to deceive me as to what a man is likely to turn out after marriage. This one will allow his wife to lead him by the nose always, and will thank her for doing it."

"His nose is in no danger from me. I tell you we shall never be anything to each other, except friends. I go to Franchard because I want change—change and work."

Madame Vanne shrugged her shoulders. "Take your own way, then," she answered rather crossly, "and I hope you will find the work at Franchard to your taste. I can see you carrying cups of coffee to the Fontainebleau shopkeepers on Sunday afternoons, and disputing over the bill with English old ladies!—a pretty occupation for your father's daughter ! If you are not back here before a week is out, I will give you leave to call me a simpleton."

It must be assumed that, in this particular instance, Madame Vanne's customary shrewdness was at fault ; for a week passed away, followed by a second and a third, and Marguerite's room at Marlotte remained vacant, and she was seen no more among her friends the artists, by whom her absence was loudly lamented. Victor nursed his wrath, but kept his own counsel. Not unnaturally, he attributed Marguerite's departure to a wish to be less hampered in her meetings with the gay hussar ; and he smiled bitterly, without replying, when Madame Vanne, whose delicacy of touch was hardly equal to her kind heart, urged him not to neglect the neighbourhood of Franchard in his walks. "Go and breakfast there

one of these mornings, M. Victor," she would say. "My brother-in-law will not starve you, and there are other people at Franchard who will perhaps give you a warmer welcome than you expect."

These hints, supported by nods and winks of a most knowing and confidential kind, failed in their effect. Victor, vexed by their frequent recurrence, annoyed by the half-ironical condolences of his comrades, and angered most of all by his inability to shake off a passion which he felt to be hopeless, began to think that a garret in Paris was, after all, preferable to comparative affluence at Montigny, and to contemplate a renunciation of his schemes for the elevation of the ceramic art; and Madame Vanne, becoming despondent also, went back to her fruit and her poultry, with an anathema upon the sentimental fancies of boys and girls who did not know their own minds for two days together.

Meanwhile, poor Némorosa was growing thin and miserable, like a caged bird, in her voluntary exile at Franchard, where her life was very much of the kind prophetically sketched by her aunt, and was to the full as distasteful to her as that sensible woman had declared it would be. She was prepared at all points for visits from M. de Valmy and Victor Berthon, and would have known how to dismiss the one and make friends with the other had they appeared; but neither of them did appear, and Marguerite would not have been a woman if this had not been more or less of a disappointment to her.

III.

Through forty years of ever-increasing prosperity it had been Madame Vanne's rule to sell her poultry, fruit, and vegetables at a stall in Fontainebleau market. Some of her friends and neighbours thought this practice a little beneath the dignity of a well-to-do person; but she said that what had been good enough for her mother and grandmother before her was good enough for her, and she clung to the old custom partly because it was an old custom, but principally because she loved noise and bustle, chaffering and haggling, and because the delight of driving a hard bargain was a pure delight to her still. Sometimes Marguerite used to accompany and assist her, standing in the background among the heaped-up melons and figs, while the old woman shrieked at her customers and shook her fingers in their faces; but latterly Madame Vanne had had to get through the business as best she could by herself.

To Fontainebleau Marguerite would not go. In vain she was entreated and appealed to; she was determined that nothing should induce her to run the risk of an encounter with De Valmy. Also she dreaded being seen in public, for she had a morbid impression that everybody must know or guess at her secret. Nevertheless, there came a time—September being on the wane, and business at Franchard showing signs of approaching slackness—when she saw fit to modify her resolution. M. de Valmy had evidently forgotten her, if indeed, as seemed highly

probable, he had not gone away altogether; and even if he should be still in the place, and she should see him, what had she to fear? It was he, not she, who ought to be embarrassed by such a meeting. Besides, her imprisonment was fast becoming intolerable to her, and she yearned to escape from it, were it only for a few hours. Influenced by these considerations she informed her aunt that she would meet her at Fontainebleau on the following Saturday; and Madame Vanne, delighted at this good news, which she took to be the first step towards a capitulation, immediately decided in her own mind that Victor Berthon should be there too.

Not a word did this wily old woman say to the young man about her niece; but when, in answer to her question, he confessed that he had never been to the market at Fontainebleau in his life, she threw up her wrinkled hands in mingled amazement and indignation. Never been to Fontainebleau market! And he an artist! But he ought to be ashamed of himself! Certainly he could have no idea of how picturesque it was. Purple grapes and white grapes, melons yellow and green, and bright red tomatoes, and pumpkins and cucumbers—not to speak of the great umbrellas, some crimson, some striped, and the women with their blue gowns and checked kerchiefs, and the soldiers with their scarlet trousers. "Colours! Why, there are colours enough in our market to make a dozen pictures!" cried Madame Vanne, whose notion of the Alpha and Omega of art was the assembling together of as many brilliant hues as could be crowded upon a canvas.

So Victor went to market on Saturday morning; and, by a somewhat strange coincidence, it chanced that Madame de Valmy, who had been out riding with her husband and M. de Chaulnes, in the early morning, selected that day of all others to dismount as she passed the busy scene, and to make herself acquainted with what she had been informed was one of the prettiest sights to be witnessed in Fontainebleau. Victor did not at first recognise the lady in the dark green riding-habit whom he accidentally jostled, and apologised to in the throng; but she remembered him, and, after a few words of very amiable greeting, introduced him to her husband. Victor bowed to the pale, weary-looking man with the lack-lustre eyes, and scowled at the hussar, who smiled pleasantly in return; and the whole party moved on slowly together.

Either to serve some purpose of her own, or out of sheer caprice, Madame de Valmy chose to be exceedingly gracious to the young artist—so gracious, indeed, that, after a time, M. de Chaulnes grew uneasy and jealous, and showed his jealousy so plainly that even Berthon could not but notice it. In this unexpected fashion the respective attitudes of the two young men became inverted; and Victor, for the first time surmising the true position of affairs as regarded the Countess and her attendant cavalier, felt his heart throb with a delicious hope. What if he had made a stupid mistake, after all? What if the Némorosa of his dreams were Némorosa still? On a sudden, as if in answer to his questions,

there was Marguerite before him, dressed all in white, as she had been when he had first seen her in the woods. She was standing in the shade of a rough wooden booth; in front of her were piles of fruit and vegetables: her face was as white as her dress, and she was gazing at him with an odd, fixed stare. Was she gazing at him, or at some one beyond him? His haste and confusion prevented him from taking in such details. He removed his hat, stammering out something about his joy at seeing her again; and she answered him scarcely less incoherently.

Madame de Valmy, meanwhile, was ordering supplies of grapes and peaches which caused Madame Vanne to open round eyes of astonishment. M. de Valmy, standing a few paces off, with eyes cast down, was tracing semicircles in the dust with the tip of his riding-whip.

"You are still at Franchard, are you not?" asked Victor a little tremulously. "If I walked out there to-morrow morning, might I hope to see you?"

"You would certainly see me," answered Marguerite, who was now almost herself again; "but I should hardly be able to speak to you. I am very busy all day. The evening is my free time; and then I generally walk to the Roche qui Pleure, and refresh myself with a little pure air. Have you ever seen the Gorges de Franchard by moonlight?" she continued with a touch of her old animation. "You ought to see that. Sometimes I think the forest is even more beautiful by night than by day."

"Moonlight?" cried Madame de Valmy, who had caught the last words; "how lovely these woods must be by moonlight! I must positively make an expedition into the forest the next time there is a full moon. M. de Chaulnes, when will there be a full moon?"

De Chaulnes answered something in a low voice; and the two strolled on. "Shall you go to the Roche qui Pleure to-night?" Victor asked hesitatingly.

"I go there every night," answered Marguerite.

And then De Valmy looked up suddenly, and, as their eyes met, a faint tinge of colour spread itself over Marguerite's pale cheeks. De Valmy moved away instantly; but that one glance had sufficed to throw Marguerite into a state of agitation which she was powerless to conceal. What could he have thought of her? she wondered. Now that it was too late, she would have given anything to recall her thoughtless speech. At the moment she had only intended to say something kind to that poor M. Berthon, and to create an opportunity for the renewal of their intimacy upon altered terms; but M. de Valmy could not be expected to have understood that; and, although she might have been willing enough to let that gentleman see that his approval or disapproval was a matter of indifference to her, she did not exactly wish him to think that she was one of those persons who console themselves for the loss of an admirer by promptly putting another in his place.

Victor, not unpardonably, accepted the blush and the subsequent

confusion as tributes to himself; and murmuring "Till this evening, then," passed on with the crowd in a jubilant frame of mind. It is needless to say that he walked all the way from Montigny to Franchard that night; nor is it necessary—except for the benefit of such persons as may be wholly unacquainted with the ways of lovers—to mention that he reached his destination a full hour before the moon rose. He knew he would have to wait; but under some circumstances the delight of anticipation is so great that waiting itself becomes almost an enjoyment; and it was very pleasant among those still, fragrant groves in the darkness. All those small noises which belong to the woodlands—whisperings in the branches overhead, stirrings in the dead leaves underfoot, and subdued creakings of the old elm-boughs—fell soothingly upon Victor's ear, as he paced to and fro, building all manner of airy castles. The frogs on the brink of the adjacent pool favoured him with a subdued, snoring accompaniment, and, every now and again, the harsh cry of a night-bird sounded from afar. After a long time spent in this idle fashion, he left covert, and, emerging upon an open space of rocks and juniper bushes, cast about him till he struck the sandy track which leads to the Roche qui Pleure and the jutting promontory whence the far-famed Gorges of Franchard can be surveyed in all their length and breadth. The moon was not yet visible; but upon the hill-tops, and on the level open country in the distance, there was a silvery haze, showing that she was already above the horizon and would soon illumine the shadowy depths upon the verge of which Victor had taken up his station.

All of a sudden he became conscious of the unwelcome fact that he was not alone in his vigil. A red spark, which could be nothing but the end of a cigar, showed itself a few yards away from him; and closer inspection revealed the presence behind it of a dark form which was evidently that of a fellow-creature. Victor promptly placed a large rock between himself and the intruder; but presently, curiosity overcoming caution, he put his head out from his hiding-place just in time to see the head with the cigar attached to it protruding from behind a block of sandstone corresponding to his own. Both heads were instantly withdrawn; and both, after a short interval, popped out again simultaneously. This was undignified and ridiculous; and Victor, having no cause to feel ashamed of himself, stepped boldly forth. A similar view of the situation apparently presented itself at the same moment to the other dissembler: for he also emerged from his concealment; and, a stray moonbeam falling upon the silver lace of his uniform, his identity was no longer a secret.

De Chaulnes at Franchard! And obviously waiting for somebody too! Victor's heart died within him. His first impulse was to spring at his supposed rival's throat; but nobody, who has not altogether lost his head, obeys his first impulse; and Victor acted in accordance with his second, which was to retire into the wood again, prop himself up against a tree, and think. His thoughts did not bring him much comfort.

There was, indeed, little room in his mind for anything but profound amazement at Marguerite's audacity and his own simplicity. She had told him to his face, almost boastfully, that she walked to the Roche qui Pleure every night; and he—idiot that he was!—had believed that she walked thither by herself. He was debating whether vengeance or silent contempt would best become him, when the rustling of a woman's dress caught his ear. The sound drew nearer and nearer, and Victor's heart began to thump. Doubtless his most dignified course would be to let her pass on to her rendezvous unmolested; but one can't be for ever thinking of one's dignity, and it is not every day that a man finds it in his power to effect a really telling *coup de théâtre*. Victor was unable to withstand the temptation that presented itself to him. He waited until Marguerite was close to the tree behind which he was concealed; and then sprang out and faced her with folded arms.

Alas! it was not Marguerite at all, but Madame de Valmy; and Victor, apologising profusely, hat in hand, wished that the earth would open and swallow him. He was so confused, and knew so little what he was saying, that he actually blurted out the whole story of his unfounded suspicions before he could stop himself. And, to crown all, he wound up with a piece of awkwardness of which he certainly would not have been guilty had he been in full possession of his senses. "If you are in search of M. de Chaulnes, madame, you will find him close to the Roche qui Pleure; and you may rely upon my—my discretion. I will not intrude upon you a second time."

"I assure you, monsieur," answered the lady gravely, but with a sound of suppressed laughter in her voice, "that I am in search of nothing but fresh air and moonlight. You, as I understand, have more exciting anticipations. Do not let me detain you from gratifying them."

Victor had no time to make any rejoinder; for now the silence of the woods was once more broken; and this time it was undoubtedly Marguerite's voice, raised in accents of distress, that reached the listeners. Every word that she said was distinctly audible.

"I will not listen to you any longer! If there is any meaning in all that you have said, you must know that the only kindness in the world that you can do me is to go away and never see me again. Why do you persecute me like this?"

"Persecute you!" answered a man's voice, which Victor did not at once recognise; "was it persecution to leave you for all these weeks without a word or a sign? I tell you I have done my best. I have tried to forget you; I have tried to live without you; and I find it is impossible. Némorosa, the Fates are too strong for us; why should we go on striving against them, only to give in in the end? You confess that you love me, and in the same breath you tell me never to see you again! What sort of a love is that?"

"What sort of a love is yours?" cried Marguerite weeping. "You make me despise you. Go!"

"Not until you have heard me out. Listen, Némorosa——"

"Monsieur, if you do not leave me I will call for help."

"Help from what? Besides, the whole world is asleep."

"You will not go, then?"

"Not yet, certainly."

Instantly there rang through the woods a shrill cry—"Help! help!" Out dashed Victor from his thicket; out dashed M. de Chaulnes from the shelter of his rock; Madame de Valmy followed more leisurely; and presently four out of a group of five persons, facing one another in a bright patch of moonlight, had assumed attitudes expressive of extreme discomfiture and dismay. The fifth remained mistress of the situation.

"Would one not say," she remarked, with a short laugh, "that we were rehearsing the garden scene from the *Barbier de Séville*? We have all been playing at cross-purposes, and apparently it falls to me to furnish explanations and to set matters straight. Happily that is not difficult. M. de Valmy—who, I am sorry to say, has the defect of being a jealous husband—sees my carriage waiting in the road; he forms his own conclusions, plunges into the wood, catches sight of mademoiselle, whom in the darkness he supposes to be his wife, and loads her with reproaches which she naturally does not understand; so that she, just as naturally, shrieks for assistance. In the meantime, monsieur here has likewise done me the honour to mistake me for a person much younger and more beautiful than myself, and has frightened me out of my wits by springing upon me from an ambush. As for M. de Chaulnes, I can not explain to myself his presence here; but I have observed that it is a peculiarity of M. de Chaulnes' to be present at times when nobody wants him. It only remains," concluded Madame de Valmy, "for us to wind up the drama after the approved fashion." She seized Victor's hand, placed it in Marguerite's, and, with a rapid movement gaining possession of her husband's arm, "Come, *mon ami*," said she; "it is time for us to leave the hero and heroine in sole occupancy of the stage. I regret that there is not room for three persons in my little carriage; but no doubt M. de Chaulnes will enjoy his walk home this fine night."

It was thus that Madame de Valmy took vengeance upon a clumsy admirer, who had very nearly led her into a compromising situation. De Chaulnes has never been forgiven; and if Madame de Valmy's name is mentioned in his presence nowadays, he pulls a wry face and changes the subject.

It may be supposed that Victor and Marguerite did not remain long hand in hand. When they were alone he asked in a hoarse voice—

"Was it true what that man said—that you love him?"

She hesitated for a moment and then answered, "Yes."

"I am sorry for you," said Victor simply, after a pause.

"It is kind of you to say that. You do not blame me, do you? It was not my fault; I did not know who he was when he—when I——"

"I understand. No; I do not blame you. Marguerite, you know

why I came here to-night. I will not say anything about that now ; of course there can be no hope for me. But some day it will be different. I shall go away from Montigny at once ; so that you will not be annoyed with the sight of me ; but I give up nothing. Time is on my side ; and I shall come back again when I can do so without fearing to offend you."

She shook her head. "Come back when you are married," she said, "and let me be your wife's friend."

"There is only one woman in the world who can ever be my wife," he answered.

And so, after a few more last words, they parted.

IV.

The winter of 1878-79 was a memorable one for the inhabitants of Fontainebleau. It began early and lasted late ; it was signalised by an intensity of cold which went far beyond the ordinary experience of even the dwellers in that high-lying region where all winters are hard, and in the midst of it there occurred a phenomenon so extraordinary that those who witnessed it will remember it to their dying day, and that the traces left by it may be expected to be visible long after they and their children shall have been laid in their graves.

One bitter January morning, when the ground was frozen as hard as iron, and the sky was low and grey, and there was a feeling of snow in the air, it suddenly began to rain—a slow, chilly rain, which froze as it fell, and remained in a crystal fringe of icicles upon the eaves of the houses, upon the telegraph-wires, upon the umbrellas of the foot-passengers, and even upon the beards and whiskers of such as possessed these adornments. This was about ten o'clock in the morning, and by midday the streets were converted into a solid sheet of ice. Traffic of all kinds was suspended ; for no horse could have kept his legs upon a surface so slippery that a man had much ado to maintain an upright attitude upon it. Travellers who had arrived by train found themselves unable to reach the town, and had to make the best of blazing fires and a state of siege at the railway-station ; peasants who had come in from the country in the early morning abandoned all hope of returning home that day ; and no one, except a few adventurous spirits, who put on skates, and enjoyed the novel pastime of cutting figures in the middle of the highway, thought of stirring beyond his own threshold. The people congregated at the windows and in the doorways, watching what looked like a rapid return of the ice age, shouting to one another across the streets, and finding the whole thing a capital joke, after the manner of their cheery nation.

And still the rain continued. It continued through the whole of that day, and through the night, and through the next day, a period of some six-and-thirty hours in all. During the second night the sleep of many a burgher of Fontainebleau was disturbed by a strange, distant din,

and not a few, recalling in a state of semi-consciousness the bad times of 1870, sat up in bed, rubbing their eyes, and murmuring that the bombardment had begun. Even a broad-awake watcher might have fancied that the little town was being made the object of a night attack. There was the booming of artillery, the crackling of musketry, and mingled with these, from time to time, a peculiar crashing sound, like the shattering of innumerable panes of glass. With morning came an explanation of this curious hubbub; and it was one which turned the merriment of the honest folks of Fontainebleau into mourning. The evil news flew from house to house: the forest, they said, was doomed. The trees, unable to support the tremendous weight of ice in which their boughs were encased, were falling as fast as their own leaves in autumn. Some were torn up by the roots, others were decapitated, others were mutilated of their limbs; it was doubtful whether, when all was over, a single tree of any size would be left standing.

The extent of the damage done, though enormous, and from an artistic point of view irreparable so far as the present generation is concerned, happily proved in the sequel to have been greatly exaggerated. At the time it could only be a matter of conjecture; for no man, save at the imminent risk of his life, could have penetrated into the forest. In the meantime, a partial thaw having set in, and the roads being once more passable, everybody hastened to the limits of the town to see what could be seen of the catastrophe that was going forward.

There was, indeed, something worth looking at. The pale wintry sun shone down upon a world of pure crystal. Every twig had a coating of ice of three or four times its own diameter; the great limes in the Avenue de Maintenon, which leads from the château, were bent forward till their topmost branches met and their lowest rested upon the ground; here and there in the gardens was an evergreen shrub, seen as through a glass shade, the ice having formed round it in a solid dome, through which each leaf could be distinguished; in the forest, through the white mist that hung over the ground, was dimly discernible the huge trunk of many a fallen giant, while the ominous crash and thunder that told of other invisible calamities went on almost incessantly.

The news of what had happened had been telegraphed to Paris, and had the effect of bringing down a few curious sight-seers from the capital in the course of the afternoon. Among these might have been noticed a gentleman of care-worn and weary aspect, whose eyes, as he picked his way along the frozen streets, were not directed towards the forest (which is visible at the end of every street in Fontainebleau), but wandered restlessly hither and thither among the ranks of the passers-by as if in search of a face that was not to be found there. M. de Valmy had neither seen nor attempted to see Marguerite again since the night when he had been so ignominiously marched off by his wife from the Franchard woods. Shortly afterwards, the Countess had declared herself satiated with rural delights, and had left for Paris, taking him with her

as a matter of course ; and for the last few months he had been endeavouring with all his might to stifle an infatuation of which he was more than half ashamed. How far he had succeeded may be judged from the fact that he had seized the first plausible excuse that offered to hasten down to Fontainebleau. He traversed all the highways and byways of the little town in the faint hope of encountering Marguerite somewhere ; and in the Rue de France he did at last catch sight of a familiar face. It was not, however, that which he was seeking, and he dropped his eyes, having no wish to recognise or be recognised by the sturdy peasant woman who was hurrying towards him. But she saw him, and instantly barred his passage.

"Oh, M. de Valmy, is that you? You have come down to see the spectacle? Ah, monsieur, what a misfortune, what a misfortune!"

"It is indeed a misfortune, Madame Vanne," answered De Valmy gravely, a little surprised at so unmeasured a display of grief; "but let us hope things may not be so bad as they seem. The forest——"

"Oh, the forest—the forest!" interrupted the old woman impatiently; "to hear people talk, one would think that the forest was a good Christian who was being assassinated. I have had more than enough of it—of that accursed forest! My niece, monsieur—you may remember my niece Marguerite—has been in love with it all her life. Yes, you may stare; but it is the simple truth that I am telling you. She has taken the forest for her lover, instead of an honest man who would have made her happy, and now, by way of reward, I believe it has brought her her death."

"What do you mean?" asked M de Valmy, who had grown a little paler than usual.

Then Madame Vanne, with many tears and interjections, related how she and her niece had come into market two days before; how they, with many others, had found themselves imprisoned in the town; and how Marguerite, excited and agitated beyond measure by the reports which had reached them, had been with difficulty restrained from rushing out into the forest to witness with her own eyes the destruction of her idol. "You conceive, monsieur, that such a thing was of the last impossibility; the woodcutters told us that one would be safer in the thick of a pitched battle than among those falling trees. Also I gave Marguerite a good scolding, and took care not to let her out of my sight. Ah, and I allowed her to escape me after all, miserable old woman that I am! I stopped for a few minutes to talk to a friend—not five minutes—and when I turned round she was gone. I have not found her—I knew I should not find her, I know I shall never see her alive again. For months past I have felt that something was going to happen to the girl. She has not been like herself; she has been always sad and silent, and so thin that you would hardly know her again. Eh! monsieur, what is it? Where are you going?"

"I am going," answered De Valmy gravely, "to find your niece."

"Where, then? We do not even know the direction that she has taken."

"But I know," said De Valmy unhesitatingly. "It is to the Rocher de Némorosa that she has gone; and it is there that I shall seek her. Let me go; I will not be stopped!" For Madame Vanne had forgotten her good manners so far as to seize him by the arm.

"What madness! you will only be killed, too. It is a suicide, nothing less; and if I did my duty, I should call the gendarmes. Still, if you are quite determined——"

"I am quite determined," returned De Valmy; and, Madame Vanne having relaxed her hold, he marched away for a few paces with quick, resolute strides. Then by degrees his speed slackened; he came to a standstill; finally he faced about and retraced his steps, his head sunk despondently upon his breast.

"Madame Vanne," said he, "I have reflected. You were right. I cannot claim the privilege of undertaking this sad and sublime quest. More than life is at stake here. If I were to return with Marguerite—nay, even if I were to die with her—what would be said of us? Alas! we live in a world which loves to think evil. Life is much; but good name is more; and it shall not be through me——" Emotion checked the speaker in the middle of his sentence.

Madame Vanne looked at him rather oddly. "Lord forgive me!" she muttered under her breath, "I believe the man is afraid!" She added aloud, with that respectful stolidity which the peasant instinctively assumes as a cloak for sarcasm, "monsieur is full of delicacy. I have only to thank monsieur for his good intentions."

And with that she dropped a curtsy and hobbled away, leaving De Valmy, who had heard the aside—as perhaps he was intended to do—to his reflections.

Was he afraid? That is precisely the question which he has never been able to answer to himself in a satisfactory manner, and which, it may be hoped, has cost him some uncomfortable half-hours. No one who knew him would ever believe that he had been so, if there were any consolation to be found in that; for he had fought many duels in his time; had even been quite badly scratched on the arm upon one occasion, and had besides been under fire repeatedly during the war. There are, however, degrees of courage; and possibly M. de Valmy, who had little or no belief in a future state of existence, may have hesitated to resign this pleasing, anxious being after so useless and inglorious a fashion. Be that as it may, he turned his back upon that awful and mysterious forest, and gloomily made his way to an hotel, where he ordered a room and awaited events.

Marguerite never returned. Two days later, one of the search-parties which had been organised found her body, where De Valmy had predicted that she would be found, near the Rocher de Némorosa. She was lying in the snow, half concealed by the colossal elm-bough which

had dealt her her death-blow. It was better to have died like that in a moment than to have perished slowly of cold, said those who broke the news to Madame Vanne, and who, like most bearers of ill-tidings, were determined to discover some germs of comfort in their melancholy mission.

A modest cross in the cemetery, close to the borders of the forest which she loved so well, marks the spot where reposes all that was mortal of Marguerite Vanne, "*dite Némorosa, Reine des Bois.*"

"Her soul is with the saints," says Madame Vanne, drying her eyes, as she rises from the little mound beside which she has been duly reciting a *De Profundis* on the *jour des morts*.

"And where is that?" asks M. de Valmy, with the mildly satirical smile of a Pilate asking "What is truth?"

"Where yours will never join it, monsieur," returns the old woman, roused to sudden wrath.

M. de Valmy carries a huge wreath of yellow immortelles tied up with a black ribbon. He is accompanied by his wife, who has commanded him to bear this tribute of respect to the memory of "that interesting and unfortunate young girl." It may be confidently asserted on behalf of Madame la Comtesse that she both knows how to chastise the sinner, and will lose no opportunity of turning her knowledge to good account.

Victor Berthon is still unmarried. If he remains so for the rest of his days, his case may at some future date be cited as a rare instance of the triumph of constancy over time.

W. E. N.

Old English Clans.

If any educated Englishman were to look now for the first time at a map of England, as he might look at a map of Central Africa or of the Sandwich Islands, there is one point about our local nomenclature which could hardly fail at once to force itself upon his attention, and that is the great prevalence of clan-names. Of course he could not tell instinctively that they *were* clan-names, any more than most of us suspect the early existence of clans in England at all; but he would certainly observe a large number of towns or villages having names of a type whereof Birmingham, Nottingham, Wellington, and Farringdon may be taken as familiar examples. Scattered up and down over the face of the map he would find them by dozens; sometimes in the simple form, as at Reading, Woking, Ealing, Barking, and Wapping; sometimes with the termination *ham*, as at Buckingham, Farningham, Framlingham, and Uppingham; sometimes with the equally transparent *ton*, as at Kensington, Islington, Allington, Haddington, and Leamington; and sometimes with various assorted suffixes, such as Billinghamurst, Hemingford, Illingworth, Basingstoke, Ovingdean, and Sittingbourne. If he further extended his inquiry so as to examine in detail the towns and villages of a single county, he would find in Kent alone no less than sixty names of the same type, and in Lincolnshire seventy-six. Sussex, again, has sixty-eight, of which the most familiar are Hastings, Worthing, Lancing, Goring, Angmering, Patching, Poling, Hollington, Rottingdean, Piddinghoe, and Billinghamurst. Supposing our imaginary investigator to collect all the names of this sort which he could extract from the Ordnance Survey of England, he would finally reach a grand total of 1,329, which would be considerably increased if he also searched the lowland counties of Scotland. By this time a flash of inspiration might not improbably suggest to his mind the notion that some underlying principle governed and regulated this chaos of names; and what this principle might be would naturally form the subject of his next inquiry. If I have succeeded in arousing a similar curiosity by this introductory paragraph in the minds of any of my readers, then, to quote from the preface of 30,000 separate works now lying buried in the recesses of the British Museum, "this treatise will not have been written in vain."

Suppose, again, the earnest student of nomenclature, whose existence I have thus postulated, were to classify alphabetically all the names which he had collected, he would soon find that several of them turned up, in similar or analogous forms, in widely different counties. Thus he would

meet with a Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire, a Bassingfield in Notts, a Bassingham and a Bassingthorpe in Lincoln, and a Basington in Northumberland. Side by side with these he would naturally place Basing and Basingstoke in Hants, if not also Bessingby in Yorkshire, and Bessingham in Norfolk. Bearing in mind the golden rule—slightly paraphrased from Voltaire—that spelling counts for nothing and pronunciation for very little, he would naturally identify Lymington in Hampshire with Leamington in Warwick, and would regard Ardington in Berks as a mere by-form of Hardington in Somerset. When he had got so far, it would certainly occur to him that Basing and Lyming and Harding must once have had some meaning of their own, and must have been given as names or parts of names to places for some sufficient and sensible reason. Before long, if he pushed his inquiries in the right direction, he would find out that they were originally the patronymics of certain old English clans; and as the history of these clans is full of all kinds of interest for all of us, in many different ways, I propose here to tell as much about them as can now be recovered by modern criticism, premising that we shall still find their traces unexpectedly present amongst us in hundreds of small and curious matters.

Though the word clan comes to us from Celtic sources, and though most people usually associate the organization which it denotes with the Celtic race alone, yet everybody now knows that the clan system is one long common to the whole Aryan race. We get it alike in the Hindu *gotra*, in the Greek *genos*, in the Roman *gens*, and in the Gaelic *sept*; and though in the Teutonic stock its memory died out in an earlier stage of development, owing, no doubt, to the strong individuality of the Teutonic mind, yet it has left behind it enduring marks on nomenclature and custom both in Germany, in Scandinavia, and in our own England. In the very earliest documents which we possess of our old English ancestors—rude songs composed by the heathen minstrels while yet the English and the Saxons dwelt together by the marshes of Sleswick and along the sand-flats of the Frisian coast—we see the clan organisation in full working order among them. The *Traveller's Song*, one of these early Anglo-Saxon poems brought over to Britain by our Teutonic forefathers (for we had Celtic forefathers as well, in spite of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Green), at the time of their exodus from their old Continental home, contains the earliest names of clans which we possess—the Herelingas, or Harlings; the Bainingas, or Bannings; the Hælsingas, or Helsingas; the Hocingas, or Hockings; and many others of like sort. Among them are the Myrgingas, or Merwings, whom in their Gallicised or Romanised form of Merovingians we all know so well as the earliest royal race of the kindred Franks. Similarly, in the grand old English epic of *Beowulf*—the Anglo-Saxon *Iliad*—a rough and jerky alliterative poem modernised and Christianised from an ancient heathen chant by an editor of the age of Alfred, we find mention of other clans—the Brentingas, the Scyldings, the Scylfings, the Wælsings,

the Wylfings, and so forth. Nay, the very earliest specimen of the English tongue which we possess consists of some runes engraved on a golden drinking-horn disenhumed in the old England of our ancestors by the Baltic shore, and bearing in very ancient English the personal name and the clan-name of its maker: "I, Hlewagast the Holting, made this horn."

And now, what is the meaning of these clan titles? Well, they seem to be very much the same in sense as the Scotch Macs and the Irish O's. They are for the most part simply patronymics, and the syllable by which they are formed is always used in early English (or Anglo-Saxon, if you prefer to call it so) to denote descent or parentage. Thus, the *English Chronicle* usually gives a pedigree in the following manner—of course ending, as is proper, with Woden, the chief of the heathen gods, who was afterwards degraded to the position of general progenitor of all royal or respectable families: "Ida," it says of the first Northumbrian king at Bamborough, "Ida was Eopping; Eoppa was Esing; Esa was Inguing; Ingui was Angenwiting; Angenwit was Alocing; Aloc was Benocing; Benoc was Branding; Brand was Bealdaging; Bealdag was Wodening." Dozens of such genealogies (always ending after the orthodox fashion with Woden, as later Scotch genealogies end with Noah or Adam) are to be found in the *English Chronicle* and other old documents: they sufficiently show what was the ordinary meaning attached by old English minds to names of this class.

At the same time it should be added that a few similar words with the same termination seem to bear a slightly different meaning. Thus, the Kentings are merely the men of Kent, not the sons of a person of that name; the Wimbeduningas, who occur in a Surrey charter, must clearly be the inhabitants of Wimbledon; the Wealthæmingas must be those of Waltham; and the Suthtuningas must be the good people of South-town, or Sutton. The various grants of land given by early English kings supply us with at least twenty such cases; but they can easily be distinguished from the real clan patronymics, because they are always compounded from the names of places, which is never the case in true clan titles. As we shall see hereafter that each clan lived together in a single place, to which it gave its own name, this easy transference of meaning does not really introduce any element of difficulty into the question. It is a simple matter to separate the men of Bromley and the men of Lambourne from the sons of Fitela and the sons of Seyld.

Even where the names are truly patronymic, however, they must, perhaps, only be accepted as representing the tradition or mythical belief of the clan, and not necessarily its real historical pedigree. Many of the families trace their descent to heroes of the old Teutonic epic cycles, whose names occur again and again in the *Nibelungen Lied*, the Scandinavian Sagas, and the early English poems; and though I myself am strongly inclined to believe heretically, with Mr. Herbert Spencer, that these heroes are real men seen through the mists of poetical fable, like Charle-

magne and Virgil in the tales of mediæval romancers, yet I have the fear of Professor Max Müller and the orthodox mythologists too vividly before my eyes publicly to inculcate my own rebellious opinions in this magazine. Let me be really ever so sure that the Teutonic tales are distorted stories told about real personages, I shall nevertheless dissemble in public, and pretend that I believe them to be solar myths. However this may be, indeed, the clans themselves had no doubt at all about the question. A large number of them believed themselves to be lineally and literally descended from birds, beasts, fishes, or plants. They were, in short, totemists, and of their totemism many traces still remain in the names of English towns and villages.

Totemism exists in modern times amongst the American Indians, the Australian Black-fellows, and many other savage races. Each clan holds itself to be descended from some particular plant or animal, whose name it bears; and members of the clan are never allowed to pick the plant or eat the animal which forms their totem. Thus, the Kangaroos may not feast on kangaroo hams. The Bechuanas are debarred from the natural enjoyment of roast crocodile; and the Blacksnakes can never taste the native Australian dainty whose name they bear. The Swans must abstain from swan-flesh; and the Turtles may eat members of a hostile tribe, but must not indulge in calipash or calipee. Now, most modern Englishmen are a little unwilling to believe that their ancestors in the days of Hengest and Horsa (whose names I mention, as the lawyers say, "without prejudice") were still at this same low stage of intellectual and social development. These things may be thought and done, they imagine, among the naked Tasmanians and the savage South Africans; they may even commend themselves to the poor Indian's untutored mind; but they cannot have been seriously held as true by any descendant of that apotheosised barbarian—Professor Max Müller's pet *protégé*—our own beloved Aryan ancestor. The fact is, however, our Aryan ancestor in person, as Mr. McLennan and Mr. Lang have shown, was a most undoubted totemist; and even our far later Anglo-Saxon progenitor, when he first landed in Britain, was a very fair specimen of an untamed barbarian indeed. He tattooed his face, like the æsthetic New Zealander; he captured his wife by main force, like the unsophisticated Australian; and he lighted the need-fire with a wooden drill, like the primitive Hindu. It was only at a later date, when missionaries from civilised Rome and civilised Ireland had introduced a little southern and Celtic culture, that the gentler Christian Anglo-Saxon took to buying his wife with so many head of cattle, like the commercial Zulu, instead of stunning her with a club, like the simple-minded Australian; and to painting his face in stripes, like the intelligent Redskin, instead of pricking it with a needle, like the amiable Polynesian: and therefore there is nothing out of keeping with Anglo-Saxon culture (or want of it) in the fact that many clan-names were derived from obvious totems. Mr. Kemble, to whose great work I owe endless obligations in this

paper, has collected a long list of early English clans, and from them I shall pick out such as seem to me most certainly to bear patronymics derived from a supposed plant or animal progenitor.*

Among the most sacred animals of the Aryan race the horse certainly takes the first rank. Even in the old Hindu poems the sacrifice of a horse forms the highest ceremony of the primitive Aryan religion; and we learn from Tacitus that the Germans of his time kept white horses in the temple enclosures at the public expense, and took auguries from their snortings and neighings. The horse was always buried by the dead warrior's side, and still accompanies the military funeral to his master's grave. Even in our own day, a horse-shoe is a lucky object, and the horse shares to some extent in the feeling for the sanctity of life. Among the Low Dutch and early English tribes near the old mouths of the Rhine and the Elbe, the horse seems to have been specially sacred. A white horse rampant forms even now the cognizance of Hanover and Brunswick. When the Jutes, Saxons, and English came to the land which was to be called after them England, they brought with them their emblem of the white horse, which serves in modern times as the ensign of Kent, the earliest Teutonic kingdom in Britain. Their leaders, real or mythical, bore the names of Hengest and Horsa, the stallion and the mare. Many of the places connected with the legendary tale of the conquest have names compounded with the word horse, as at Horstead, Horstedkeynes, Horsham, and Horsley. The progress inland of the West Saxons seems to be marked by the white horses cut into the chalk downs of Wantage and Westbury. The final victory of Egberht over the West Welsh, or Cornish, was won at Hengestesdun in Cornwall, now Hingston—that is to say, Horse-down; whence the surnames Hingeston and Hingston. In short, the horse, or Horsa, and the stallion, or Hengest—man or animal, as you will—are mixed up with all the story of the English conquest of South Britain, and even when the missionaries first came the eating of horse-flesh was made by them the chief test of adherence to English heathendom.

Now, the sons of the horse, or the Horsings, though no mention occurs of them in our documents, have left their mark at two places called Horsington, one of them in Lincolnshire, and the other in Somerset. Almost as sacred as the horse among animals was the ash among trees; and the son of Hengest who succeeded him as king of Kent was named Æsc or Ash, from whom the subsequent Kentish kings were called Æscings or Ashings. (The Anglo-Saxons spelt almost as vilely as Mr. Isaac Pitman and the spelling reformers, and the best way for a modern reader to do is to dismiss their orthography summarily, and read the words at once as if they were latter-day English.) One of Mr. Kemble's charters contains a mention of certain other Æscings in

* The idea of this analysis was suggested to me by a remark in Mr. Lang's learned and scholarly *Prolegomena to Aristotle's Politics*.

Surrey, and the clan has left its name in a slightly corrupted form at Ashendon in Bucks and elsewhere.* The Berings, or sons of the bear, mentioned in another charter, have perhaps stamped their name upon four spots called Berrington in the counties of Durham, Gloucester, Salop, and Worcester respectively. The Buccings, or sons of the buck, have made themselves a home at Buckingham; while the very similar Boccings, who trace their descent rather from the beech, still survive at Bocking in Essex and Suffolk. The birch, another highly sacred tree, was the ancestor of the Bercings, or as we should now say Birchings, who dwelt originally at Birchington in Kent. The wolf was also a favourite Teutonic beast, whose name belongs in the simple form to one of the characters in *Beowulf*, while it makes up the last syllable not only in that hero's own name, but also in those of *Æthelwulf*, *Eadwulf*, *Beorhtwulf*, and many other old English celebrities. His sons, the Wulfings, are mentioned in one of the charters in the *Codex Diplomaticus*; but if they ever settled a Wolvington or Woltingham, it is not now to be discovered on the map of England. That commonest and most ubiquitous of totems, the snake, however, fares better. His old English name is *wyrm*—that is, worm—which we have now degraded so as to apply to the earthworm only, though in blind-worm and slow-worm it still retains a shade of its original meaning. The Scandinavians, as usual, dropped the W, changing worm into orm, just as they changed *wylf* into *ulf*; so that the Great Orm's Head means the Snake's Head. Orm with them was a personal name, which we get at Ormskirk—that is to say, Orm's church. Some such primitive English Wyrn perhaps gave his name to the family of the Wyrminges, who are now amply represented at Wormingford in Essex, Worminghall in Bucks, and Wormington in Gloucester. Finally, to close our first list of plant and animal totems, that very holy Teutonic tree, the thorn, was the forefather of the Thornings, mentioned in a Kentish charter, and another branch of the Thornings were clearly the first inhabitants of Thornington in Northumberland.

Besides these terrestrial totems, however, there are a large number of people all the world over who, like the Egyptian kings and the Peruvian Incas, lay claim to a yet higher descent—from the sun himself. The Sunnings in Berkshire are noted in a document printed by Kemble, and the pretty village of Sonning, on the banks of the Thames near Reading, keeps their memory green to the present day. (Here, by the way, our Anglo-Saxon ancestor certainly scores one in the matter of

* Errors of nomenclature affecting this class of names are liable to occur in two ways. On the one hand, forms like Bensington and Cardingham get shortened down to Benson and Cardinham, much as careless speakers now say Birminham and Kensinton; and, on the other hand, totally distinct words like Huntandun and Dunnantun become assimilated to the common clan type as Huntingdon and Dunnington, much as careless speakers now say Edingborough and Beckingham. Glastonbury appears as Glæstingabyrig in early English, but Abingdon appears as Abbandun.

spelling.) Sunninghill and Sunningwell, also in Berkshire, no doubt mark the offshoots of the same solar race. The stone is likewise perhaps a totem, derived, it may be, from the stone hatchet of a yet earlier age, and the Stanings were clearly the sons of Stones, still surviving at Steyning in Sussex, as well as at Stanningfield, Stanninghall, Stanningley, and Stannington, in various other counties.

All these names are fairly transparent even to those readers who do not understand Anglo-Saxon. The words of which they are compounded have come down almost unchanged to our own time. But in other cases the roots have either become obsolete or undergone a good deal of contraction. It is not difficult, indeed, to recognise the sons of the fern in the Fearnings of a Hampshire charter, one branch of whom have given their name to Farningham in Kent. But those who do not know the old English word *earn*, an eagle, would fail to recognise at once the parentage of the Earnings and the Ernings, from two of Mr. Kemble's charters—clans whose *tun* or *ham* cannot now be identified. Still less would most modern readers discover that the Eohings were the sons of the steed, or the Stutings of the gnat. About some others I cannot myself feel quite sure; but it seems likely that the Beardings were the sons of the hawk or buzzard, the Ceannings (or Cannings) of the pine or fir, the Heartings of the hart, and the Hanings of the cock. Whether the Piperings were really the sons of pepper (a Græco-Latin word, probably not adopted into English till after the introduction of Christianity) I should hardly like to decide offhand.

For all the clans which I have hitherto mentioned there is old English manuscript authority. The names of others can only be inferred from the modern towns or villages called after them. Thus, Oakington in Cambridgeshire affords a good ground for believing in a clan of Æcings, or sons of the Oak. Elmington in Northamptonshire similarly points back to a family of Elminges as its first founders. The pretty little village of Cockington, near Torquay, vouches for the former existence of the Cockings, who have also left their traces at Cocking in Sussex. Everybody knows how sacred was the raven among the Northmen, were it only from the story of the raven banner, woven by the daughters of Ragnar Lodbrok, which waved its wings in the breeze when the host was destined to be victorious, but hung down limply, as if in sorrow, when it was doomed to defeat. No doubt it was a bird of equal omen among our English forefathers; and Raveningham in Norfolk proves that it numbered its sons upon the roll of conquerors in East Anglia. Swanington in Leicestershire similarly implies the sons of the swan. Not quite so obvious is Everingham in Yorkshire; but analogy points back to the Eoferings; and *eofer* is good old English for a wild boar, who reappears at Eversley, the wild boar's ley or haunt, and at Evershot, his holt or forest. *Eofer*, in fact (the High German *eber*), is just the same word as Latin *aper*, metamorphosed in accordance with Grimm's law, in the same way as *pater* is metamorphosed into *father*; and the Everings are thus the sons of the boar.

The Oterings of Otterington and Ottringham are clearly sons of the otter; but it is harder to recognise the Illings of Illingworth as descendants of the hedgehog, or the Lexings of Lexington as the remote offspring of the salmon. The Ælings of Allington may represent the family of the eel, but more likely they are only Æthelings or nobles, slightly fore-shortened. The Hafocings of Hawkinge, however, are most undoubted sons of the hawk. Concerning the following I have more doubt: The Elcings of Elkingham may represent the elk; the Fincings of Finchingfield, the finch; the Eorpings of Erpingham, the wolf (*eorp*); the Hofings of Hovingham, the coltsfoot; and the Thryscings of Thrusington, the thrush.

Leaving out of consideration the dubious cases, however, and taking note only of the certain ones, it is impossible not to observe that these names exactly coincide with the most sacred birds, beasts, and plants of the European world on the one hand, and with the class of objects usually employed as totems on the other. The wolf, the bear, the buck, the boar, the horse; the eagle, the hawk, the swan; the serpent; the oak, the ash, the elm, the thorn; and the sun—these are common objects of worship all the world over, and all of them may be paralleled as totems among modern savages. When one adds that they were almost all borne as proper names by various personages of the Teutonic race in early times, the inference as to the totemism of our old English ancestors becomes almost irresistible.

I ought to add, to prevent misapprehension on the part of my readers, that by no means *all* the Old English clan-names can be traced back to totems. On the contrary, out of a total of some 700 known clans, only about fifty can with any confidence be derived from this source. Of the remainder, some are confounded with other obvious roots; for example, the Beadings are the sons of war; the Beorhtings, sons of light or brightness; the Garungs, sons of the spear; the Banings, sons of bane or mischief; the Wigings, sons of war or victory; and the Seggings, sons of the warrior. Others, again, are clearly mere patronymics of the common type, as when Alfred is called Æthelwulfing—that is to say, the son of Æthelwulf; or when the descendants of Karl the Great are spoken of as Karlings or Carlovingians. Yet others are apparently derived from gods or heroes, though of course these gods may themselves be the half-mythical, half-traditional ancestors of the race. For example, the East-rings and Hellings may be the descendants of Eastre and Hel; and the Scyldings are the descendants of the hero Scyld. Finally, a large number of the clan-names seem to be compounded of quite inexplicable and obsolete roots. This is always the case with the earliest elements of nomenclature in every country. It is easy enough to discover the meaning of Sophocles and Euripides, of Anaxagoras and Pisistratus; but it is hard for anyone to pick out with certainty the sense of Æneas or Ajax, of Peleus or Achilles, either because their roots are obsolete in the classical Greek, or because the words themselves have undergone so

large an amount of wear and tear as to have become practically unrecognisable.

Most of the English families had already acquired their names long before the colonisation of Britain, for these names are held in common by them and by the other Teutonic families on the Continent. Just as there are now Smiths and Joneses in London and in America and in Australia, because there were Smiths and Joneses in England and Wales before America and Australia were settled by Englishmen; so there are Harlings and Billings and Hartings in Germany and Scandinavia and England, because there were Harlings and Billings and Hartings in the old Teutonic Fatherland before south-eastern Britain was settled by the Teutons. The English Wælsings, who fixed their home at Walsingham, are the same as the Norse Völsungar, or Woolsings as we should call them—a form actually found in England at Woolsingham in Durham. They were the family of Siegfried, the hero of the *Nibelungen Lied*. In the old English epic of *Beowulf*, Sigmund, the father of Siegfried, is called a Wælsing. The Harlings of Harlingham are found again at Harlingen in Friesland. The Scyldings and Scylfings, the most famous of the Northern races, reappear in Britain at Skelding and Shilvington, as Mr. Kemble points out. The Ardings of Ardingley are the royal race of the Visigoths and Vandals. The Hælsings of Helsington recur in the Swedish Helsingland and Helsingford. The Thydings of Thorrington are suspiciously like the Thuringians, as we call their High German representatives in our Latinised fashion. The Wylfings, a tribe well known in Northern tradition, are also celebrated in our English *Beowulf* and the *Traveller's Song*. Mr. Kemble, from whom I borrow most of these instances, has collected many other cases of clan-names common to the English and continental Teutons.

Again, in England itself, we find many curious repetitions of the same family name in different parts of the country. It does not matter whether we are in Jutish Kent, in English Norfolk, or in Saxon Hampshire, clan villages with identical titles turn up in all alike. There is a Beckingham in Essex and there is a Beckingham in Lincolnshire. Hollingbourn in Kent is paralleled by Hollingdon in Bucks, Hollington in Sussex, and Hollingworth in Cheshire. The Billings, not content with being the royal race of the continental Varini, have planted English colonies in thirteen separate counties, from Billingsgate in Middlesex to Billington in Lancashire, and from Billingham in Sussex to Billingham in Durham. Almost all the leading clans are to be found in like manner widely scattered over the whole area of Teutonic Britain.

Now, how has this come about? Must we believe with Mr. Kemble that different members of the chief clans went to different parts of the country indiscriminately—that Saxons joined with Jutes in the conquest of Kent, and that Jutes joined with English in the conquest of Northumbria? This seems a little improbable. It appears far more likely that the same clan-names may have existed among the different

tribes of old English, Jutes, and Saxons, as well as among their Frisian, Danish, and Frankish brethren. Mr. A. Lang has suggested a clever explanation of this peculiarity, which I believe to be the true one. Wherever totemism exists it is accompanied by certain strict regulations as to marriage and "forbidden degrees." Moreover, kindred is generally reckoned on the mother's side. "In the savage and barbaric world," says Mr. Tylor, "there prevails widely the rule called by McLennan exogamy or marrying out, which forbids a man to take a wife of his own clan—an act which is considered criminal, and may even be punished with death. Among the Iroquois of North America the children took the clan-name or totem of the mother; so if she were of the Bear clan, her son would be a Bear, and accordingly he might not marry a Bear girl, but might take a Deer or a Heron." It is probable, indeed, that the Teutonic people had arrived at the stage of counting kindred by the father's side long before the colonisation of England; but if exogamy and the female kinship system had once existed amongst them, it would quite account for the community of clan-names in the different tribes. For if a Holt-ing in Old England or Sleswick had ever stolen himself a wife from among the Wylfings of Friesland or Jutland, her children would all be counted as Wylfings too; and thus the same clans would get spread by successive exogamous marriages over the whole Low Dutch shore, from what is now Belgium to what is now Mecklenburg. Afterwards, when the custom of counting by the father's side came in, the clans would still be called by their old common names, and would keep up a certain tradition of kinship, as is actually the case amongst certain civilised nations at the present day. Thus a Brahman may not marry a woman whose clan-name is the same as his own, however wide apart they may be in relationship; nor may a Chinese take a wife of his own surname. It is as though we held all Smiths to be distantly related to one another, and forbade them to marry among themselves for fear of their turning out to be twenty-seventh cousins.

In the old continental England the clans each lived in their own little township or territory, surrounded by a wild belt or mark of forest, marsh, or heath, and cut off from all similar townships by this intervening neutral ground. The clan was, in fact, a little independent commonwealth, with its own land, its own village, and its own slaves. And so the townships were each called after the name of the clan which inhabited them. When the fierce English pirates went forth to conquer abandoned and defenceless Britain, they went forth clan by clan, each leader embarking his men, his women, and his children in his keels or long-boats, and carving out for himself a new little territory or petty principality in the more fertile and cultivated soil of the deserted Roman province. Hence the local nomenclature of south-eastern Britain was widely altered by the English conquest. The Dodings and Heardings and Hornings of the new-comers cared little for the ancient British or Roman names. Their *ham* or *tun* was Horningham or Doddington; and

they did not trouble themselves to ask their Welsh serfs for the older title of the ruined villa or homestead. That, however, by no means proves that the English settlers exterminated every Welshman they found upon the soil. The Dutch in South Africa call their new homesteads by their own names—Rorke's Drift or Vanrenen's Kloof—but we know that they have not exterminated the Zulus for all that. Dozens of negro huts cluster round the Dutch Boer's farmhouse; and so I believe dozens of Welsh serfs had their cottages around the homestead of the English lord. At any rate, be this as it may, the local names of south-eastern Britain are now almost exclusively Teutonic; but the physique of the peasantry is largely dashed with the long skulls, dark hair, and bronze complexion of the Celtic and Euskarian aborigines.

The simplest form of the clan-name, as bestowed upon the common township or landed territory of the clan, consists of the family patronymic itself in the nominative plural. This is the form we find most frequently in the old documents. Thus we have in the charters or in the *English Chronicle* Hastings, Puningas, and Billingas, now known as Hastings, Poynings, and Billings (for I need hardly say that the conjectural derivation of the first-named town from Hæsten the pirate is a wild and random guess of some ill-informed local antiquary). In most cases, however, the plural form has been lost in the course of time, so that the Berecingas of the charters is now Barking, Dicelingas is now Ditchling, and Mallingas, Pæccingas, Reádingas, Sunningas, Stæningas, and Wocingas, reappear as Malling, Patching, Reading, Sunning, Steyning, and Woking. Wanetingas, where King Alfred was born, has undergone a more forcible curtailment into Wantage. Ashling, Basing, Bocking, Dorking, Ealing, Epping, Wapping, Worthing, and many others seem to be formed on the like analogy. In each case the name is originally that of the clan alone; but just as we now talk of Smith's or Brown's, and still oftener of the Joneses' and the Walker's, meaning the house, not the people, so these clan-names came at last to apply to the township which they held. There is good reason for believing that each such clan originally formed a little independent commonwealth, and that they only slowly coalesced into the kingdoms of the East and West Kentings, the South Saxons, the Surreys, and so forth, just as these petty principalities themselves afterwards coalesced into the larger kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria, and finally into the single kingdom of England.

Commoner than the simple form in the nominative plural are the compound forms with *ham*, *tun*, *stead*, or other like terminations. Confining our attention for a moment to the first letter of the alphabet alone, we have *hams* at Aldingham, Aldringham, Antingham, and Arlingham; *tons* at Ablington, Accrington, Aclington, Alkington, Alwington, and Arlington; a *worth* at Arthingworth; and a *don* at Astrington. Beside the fords over the rivers, so important before the building of bridges, we find Chillingford, Hemingford, Manningford, and

Shillingford. Amongst the hursts, leys, hoes, and fields of the forest regions, such as the Weald or the great belt of Selwood, we meet with Billingham, Bletchingley, Piddinghoe, and Hanningfield. Sometimes, too, these village names disclose a sad tale for the Teutonic extirpationists. The Wealings, sons of the Welshman (tell it not in Wells, publish it not in the quads of Trinity), appear as a very good English clan at Wallingford, Wallington, Wellington, Wellingborough, and eight other places. This is one of those casual indications which, like the "British robbers" in the Fens and the Welsh churls in Cambridge, are calculated sadly to disturb the peace of Mr. Green and make Mr. Freeman turn uneasily in that cathedral seat from which he loves to lay down with such iterative emphasis the eternal and immutable truths of English history.

The clan-names, indeed, may be used with good historical results as a test of the comparative density of the Teutonic colonisation. If we examine any good county maps of England, it will be clear that village names of the clan type are found most thickly in the oldest colonies, and decrease in number as we move inward and westward from the original centres. Mr. Kemble has pointed out that while we have still sixty-eight names compounded of clan-names in Sussex, and sixty in Kent, the two oldest Teutonic counties, we have only eighteen in Surrey, ten in Hertfordshire, two in Cornwall, and none at all in Monmouth. If we take the several kingdoms in detail, we get even clearer results. Thus, Hampshire, the original nucleus of Wessex, has 33 clan villages; Dorset has 21; Devon, a very large county, has 24; Cornwall only 2; and even Wilts no more than 25. Along the east coast clan-names cluster thickly. Essex has 48; Norfolk and Suffolk 153, and Lincolnshire 76; but as we move inland into Mercia, Leicestershire has 19, Bucks 17, Rutland (a small shire) 4, and Worcester 13. So in the north, again, Yorkshire (of course a very big county) has 127, and Northumberland has 48; but Derby has 14, Lancashire 26, Cumberland 6, and Westmoreland 2. These figures sufficiently suggest the fact that the English settled thickly along the exposed coasts and up the navigable rivers, but spread slowly and sparsely, as little isolated military colonies, among the unconquered Britons of the interior and the west.

Moreover, if we look still more closely at any particular county, we shall find that the clan-names group themselves in little clusters around the most accessible and fertile spots. In Sussex, for example, we get one small group about the Bill of Selsea, the very place where the real or mythical Ælle is said to have landed from his three keels. According to the Chronicle, Ælle and his sons marched straight upon the neighbouring Roman fortress of Regnum, which they took by storm, while they drove the Welsh into Andred, the forest of Anderida, or, as we now call it, the Weald of Sussex. Regnum took the new name of Cissanceaster or Chichester, from Cissa the son of Ælle (historical existence not guaran-

teed). Well, on the Bill of Selsea itself, and around Chichester, we get East and West Wittering, Donnington, Funtington, Cocking, Aldingbourne, and several others. Along the strip of south coast, between the downs and the sea, we find a long string of clan villages, from Climping and Tortington, past Poling, Patching, Angmering, Ferring, Goring, Tarring, Worthing, Steyning, and Lancing, to the group of combe-nestled hamlets around Brighton, including Blatchingden, Ovingdean, Rottingdean, Poynings, and Ditchling. This district probably represents the original South Saxon colony. Fourteen years later, according to the tradition embodied in the *English Chronicle*, Ælle and Cissa started from this their western principality to attack the great Roman-Welsh fortress of Anderida (now Pevensey), which guarded the low eastern coast and the approach to the South Downs. The fall of Anderida probably put the eastern half of the county in their power, and they could now plant fresh colonies in the fertile valley of the Ouse about Lewes, where we find traces of clan settlements at Bletchington, East Tarring, Piddinghoe, Beddingham, Malling, and Chillingham. Even more closely do the clan-names cluster in the small glen of the Cuckmere river, just below the heights of Beachy Head. Here, within a few miles of one another, stand no less than ten villages of the Teutonic type—Jevington, Littlington, Lullington, Folkington, Wilmington, Arlington, Willingdon, Chalvington, Chiddingley, and Hellingley. Nowhere else in England, save in this very Teutonic belt of South Saxon coast, do the marks of Germanic colonisation lie so closely together. Finally, in the outlying and then almost insulated Rape between the Pevensey marshes, the Romney marshes, and the Weald, a little independent tribe of Hæstingas fixed their home in the glen at Hastings, with Hollington, Guestling, and Whatlington guarding their rear. These three districts—the shore from Chichester to Brighton, the valley of the Ouse around Lewes, and the sandy heights about Hastings—form the three great nuclei of Teutonic colonisation in Sussex.

On the other hand, the moment we get back of the downs into the flat and infertile levels of the Weald, the forest region whither Ælle and his sons drove out such of the Welsh as they did not enslave, we find a very different state of things. Here the clan-names are few and far between; and when they do appear, their terminations generally show that they were not *hams* or *tuns*, entire village communities of English householders, but mere *hursts*, *dens*, and *fields*, clearings of swineherds and hunters in the great waste. Billinghamurst, Warminghurst, Shillingley, Ardingley, and Itchingfield sound more like clan encampments than clan settlements. More often still the names of this region have no connection with the patronymics at all, but are derived from beasts, trees, or natural peculiarities. Such are the Hartfields, Uckfields, Nutfields, Frantfields, and Rotherfields; the Coneyhursts, Ticehursts, Midhursts, Farnhursts, Ewhursts, Nuthursts, and Maplehursts; the Woodmancotes,

Withyams, Wetherdens, Buxteds, and Cowfolds, which meet one at every turn in driving through the Sussex Weald. One such instance of an analysis of county nomenclature will sufficiently show the value of these clan patronymics as a test and gauge of English colonisation in Britain.

Before quitting this part of the subject it may be well to add that the English pirates and robbers only changed the names of the country districts, the *prædia* and *latifundia* of the old Roman proprietors, whose homestead villas we still find in ruins over the whole country ; but they seldom or never altered the name of a great town or a natural feature. In short, they merely called their own estates by their own names, leaving the general nomenclature of the country untouched. For rivers, hills, and cities, the Romanised Welsh titles still survive. Sabrina is still the Severn ; Thamesis is still the Thames ; Ouse and Avon, Exe and Swale, are good Celtic words to the present hour ; London, Lincoln, York, and Manchester keep to-day their British and Roman names ; even smaller fortresses like Dover and Richborough are still called by corrupt forms of their Celtic titles. Where the English gave a new name, as in Thanet and Selwood, the old British names, Ruim and Coit Mawr, survived among the Welsh serfs till the days when some Welsh writer compiled the Life of Alfred attributed to Asser. Immense as was the revolution in the nomenclature of Britain effected by the English colonisation, I believe it was really a mere matter of rural farm-naming, as we now speak in the Assam Hills of Ainsley's Estate or Richardson's Concession. The English, I believe, settled down upon the lands that had been abandoned by the Roman landowner. They found the Britons in the condition of serfs, and they kept them still as serfs. They burnt the Roman villa and the Christian church (wherever they found one), for they hated stone buildings ; and they put up in their stead their own low wooden homesteads, with the long shed or hall of their ealdorman in the midst. They divided out the land among the clansmen on their own communal system, with so much tilled soil for each, and right of pasturage for so many beeves, and mastage for so many swine in the woodlands. But they avoided the towns, where the Romanised Celtic inhabitants, I cannot but believe, made peace with them on terms of tributary subjection, as we know the Romanised Gaulish provincials made peace with the kindred Franks of Clovis. South Britain, I take it, at the end of the Roman dominion, was a mere wide expanse of *latifundia*, tilled by slave labour, with a few military stations and trading towns scattered up and down sparsely over its surface. The English pirates annexed and divided the *latifundia* and the slaves, and reduced the towns to a state of tributary subjection, but otherwise left them pretty much to their own devices. This is what the analogy of Teutonic conquest elsewhere during the Folks-wandering would lead us naturally to expect, and I see no sufficient evidence to show that things in England happened very differently in this respect from things in the rest of Roman Europe generally.

And now one last interesting question remains. Do any of these clan-names survive as family surnames at the present day? I am inclined to think they do. It is true, our surnames as a rule date back no further than the thirteenth or fourteenth century; and the clan system seems to have broken down in great part with the introduction of Christianity in the seventh. Perhaps the religious ceremonies offered up to the gentile gods, the deified progenitors of the clan, may have had a great deal to do with keeping up the feeling of unity in the various families and townships; and the system may have broken down in part when the common worship of the clan-father was exchanged for that of the Christian God. Still, I cannot help thinking that many clans, especially in remote country parts, must have kept up their names and their traditions for many ages, just as the Scotch Highlanders still do in our own day. At any rate, many modern surnames are identical with old clan patronymics, and they may at least possibly have descended in unbroken succession from the ancient heathen times till they were adopted as surnames in the Plantagenet period. Of these I will give a few examples.

The Annings of the charters find a modern representative in Mary Anning of Lyme Regis, the geologist and discoverer of the great Lias saurians. The Brunings are sufficiently vouched for by Mr. Robert Browning, the poet. The Ceannings found a famous descendant in George Canning, the statesman. The Hartings and Hardings are familiar to all of us at the present day. I have noticed an Arding at Bath. Fielding, the novelist, belongs to the settlers of Faldingworth. Cardinal Manning is clearly a member of the same family which founded Manningtree and several other colonies. Admiral Byng had ancestors at Bingfield. Bunting, Clavering, Hemming, Pickering, Spalding, Stebbing, Twining, and Willing, are all forms which occur in composition in the names of places, and which are also familiar surnames at the present day. Miles Standish's Caesar was "Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Golding of London." Some others are rather more doubtful. Puningas, the pretty little village at the foot of the northern escarpment of the South Downs, has been modernised as Poynings; but as a surname I fancy it may be recognised as Powning. In several other cases I have met with surnames which look very much like clan patronymics, but which are found neither in the charters nor in composition in the names of places. Such are Waring, Pauling, Cumming, Keating, Mincing, Sweeting, and many more. Altogether, I have collected nearly 200 of like sort, but I will let my readers off the rest of the list—a rare piece of self-denial on the part of a man with a hobby.

There is another class of surnames, however, which must not be confounded with these probably genuine survivals. Reading, Cocking, Goring, and Worthing are all patronymics at the present day; but they are far more likely to be derived indirectly from the places so called than directly from the original clans. They belong to our large class of local

or territorial surnames, such as Leicester, Sheffield, York, and Kingston. When the plural form is employed, we may set them down as local or territorial without any doubt, as in the case of Warren Hastings, Josh Billings, or Mr. Jesse Collings (for I make bold to suppose that the surname of any public man is in a sense public property, at least for philological purposes). In this indirect way, the clans have provided surnames for a large proportion of the English people. Thus the Wæssings gave their name to Washington in Derbyshire, Durham, and Sussex; next, one of these villages in turn gave its name to the Virginian family which finally produced George Washington; and then, to complete the cycle, George Washington gave his name, again, to the capital of the American Republic. Codrington, Conington, Doddington, Effingham, Farrington, Illingworth, Livingstone, Pakington, and Whittington, are all names famous in one way or another, and all derived from English villages bearing clan titles. Of these, too, I have collected a quite unmanageable list, which I generously forego. Sometimes the process of transference proceeds one degree further. The Codingas who settled in Cheshire and Notts called their villages of Coddington after their own name; a family of Coddingtons sprung from one of these villages gave birth to a scientific Coddington; and a peculiar kind of small lens is known as a Coddington from his name. Remington rifles are another case of the same sort. Indeed, our whole modern life is still permeated in every direction by traces of the old English clans; and yet their very existence is now all but forgotten by all the world, which, nevertheless, uses their names familiarly every day in talking of Warrington and Birmingham, of Paddington and Kensington, of Wellington's victories or of Elkington's electro-plate. So often may words be upon our lips without our ever giving a single thought to their origin and meaning, or their vast historical implications.

G. A.

I Japanese Story.

For more than a thousand years two widely differing religions, and an indifferentist if not sceptical philosophy, have informed the minds and ruled the lives of the people of Japan, without once causing the sword to be drawn, or the weapon of civil oppression to be used, in the promulgation or defence of a dogma, a theory, or a ritual. Shintô, perhaps principally autochthonous, at an early date received a considerable admixture of Taoism; and, after the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century, extended a similar hospitality to the new doctrine, while to both religions were added the teachings of Confucius by Kūkai, better known as Kôbôdaishi, the inventor of the Japanese syllabary, and the eclectic or fusionist founder of the Shingon sect. "As a rule," acutely observes an Italian savant, Carlo Puini, in his interesting little book, *I sette Genii della Felicità*, "the people of Japan believe with equal fervour in all the deities found in the Buddhist or Shintô temples, and pray to the former and to the latter with the same ardour, the more pleased the greater the number of holy beings they find ready to listen to their prayers and disposed to grant their petitions." Roughly speaking, it may be said that the peasantry are rather Shintôist than Buddhist, the *samurai* and townspeople rather Buddhist than Shintôist, in their faith; while the literates are mostly indifferentists. The agnostic formula, indeed, is not unknown in Japan. "All that the priesthood affirms," said a Japanese sceptic in the course of a Buddhist disputation, at which, fortunately, an Englishman was present who has given a most interesting account of what he saw and heard upon the occasion,* "all that the priesthood affirms on the subject of heaven and hell is a mere fabrication. . . . If you explain the visible, which the eye can see and the understanding grasp," adds this Japanese Comtist, "well and good; but as to the invisible, who can believe?"

Buddhism, however, is still a living force in the country. The attempt at a revival of pure Shintô made by Mabuchi—a descendant of the gigantic crow that guided Jimmu, the primæval ancestor of the Mikado, on his conquering expedition to the shores of Japan, and his successor Motôôri—in the course of the eighteenth century, and renewed in the present century by Hirata, who died some thirty years ago, ended

* *A Discourse on Infinite Vision*, by J. M. James, *Tr. As. Soc. Japan*, vol. vii., a curious and striking instance of the hair-splitting dialectics and windy metaphysics of Buddhism.

merely in the production of a voluminous and well-nigh forgotten though very remarkable literature, which only a single European scholar, the accomplished Japanese Secretary to her Majesty's Legation at Yedo, has had the courage to explore. Nor has the official countenance lent to the ancient religion served to increase, scarcely indeed to maintain, its authority and influence. Buddhism, on the other hand, though somewhat frowned upon by the Government, gains daily in power, and manifests even a certain inclination to establish a foreign propaganda. In most Buddhist countries, and notably in China, the religion of the son of Mâyâ has long been a mere shadow of its past self. But in Japan it has always been the cult of the dominant military and territorial caste, from the days of Yoritomo, the founder of the Shôgunate, up to the abolition of that *imperium in imperio* in 1868. Its powerful sects and wealthy abbots, backed by numerous vassals, have played a conspicuous part in the history of the country. Its gorgeous ritual has attracted the crowd repelled by the big worded but meaningless prayers that constitute almost the whole ceremonial of Shintô, while its subtle metaphysics and grandiose if complicated cosmogony have not been without charm for the educated. The perfect toleration that forms its distinguishing excellence, originating in the theory that whatever of good any religion might contain was the work of a Buddha, and whatever of bad of a Buddhist demon, and a code of ethics inferior only to that of Christianity, have given worthier and more permanent elements of vitality to a system which would otherwise have been stifled by the mass of superstition and idolatry that overlaid it almost from the beginning. Lastly, the learning of the empire has to a considerable extent been a monopoly of the Buddhist clergy. Purely Buddhist literature is itself of vast extent, the study of which would require the devotion of a lifetime without hope of reward in the shape of adequate result. But there exists a popular literature less difficult of comprehension, and far more interesting in substance, as well as attractive in form, than the interminable logomachies of the sects, and the endless expositions of the Chinese translations of, and treatises upon, the various Buddhist Sutras. The hagiology of the East has found as many admirers as that of the West. The resemblances between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism in ritual and organisation have been often pointed out; they are sufficiently striking, and are not, perhaps, wholly accidental. But the resemblances between the hagiologies of the East and West are closer still, and of a more fundamental character. In reading the life of a Buddhist saint we are constantly reminded of European mediæval saint-biographies, of the *Acta Sanctorum*, nay, even of so modern a production as Montalembert's famous work. In the East, as in the West, the coming of the holy man is heralded by omens; his birth takes place in the midst of prodigies; his life and teaching are illustrated and enforced by miracles; his death is accompanied by marvellous events; his ashes, his very cast-off garments, are endued with supernatural powers; his tomb, the scenes of his griefs and joys, the

places where he has communed with himself, striven with himself, vanquished himself, become the resort of successive generations of pious pilgrims. Let the following story of the birth and youth of Nichiren speak to this matter. It is epitomised from a biography of the saint in five volumes, containing numerous woodcuts illustrating, with considerable power, the more striking passages in the life of the saint, and written with a quaint and naive simplicity it were vain to attempt to reproduce. Nichiren, it must be premised, was the founder of the sect known by his name, or by that of Hokké, the Lotus Law sect, one of the latest established in Japan, as an offshoot, however, like most other existing sects, of one of those into which Buddhism was already divided at the period of its introduction from Koren in the sixth century. These sects differ from each other in their ritual, in their prayer formulas, in their magic, in the *sutras* they read or chant, in their metaphysics to some extent, and in the degree in which Shintô, Confucianist, and Taouist elements enter into their doctrine. Each sect, moreover, has commonly its peculiar *honzon*, or symbol of adoration, usually set up over the altar, and regarded by the vulgar mainly as an idol. The Hokké sect, however, do not follow this practice, though an image of their founder is commonly placed in their chapels to remind the faithful of his work; the sect, nevertheless, is said at the present day to be the most addicted of all to superstitious practices.

Before proceeding to our story we may pause for a moment to listen to what the Japanese hagiologist has to say of the method and purpose of his task. His desire, he tells us in his preface, which is not more modest than such prefaces usually are, has been to avoid display of scholarship, on the one hand, and lack of accuracy on the other; to present the life of the Great Teacher so "as to bring what occurred 500 years ago as vividly before the mind's eye as the events of yesterday," in language so simple, aided by illustrations so graphic, that "even women and children may understand it, and that thus all may be led to strive after righteousness in thought and conduct." With the law and doctrine of the Teacher he does not concern himself; for have not learned and pious men written so many volumes upon these matters that an ox would sweat under their burden? To the study of these he earnestly begs his readers to devote themselves, for, in his book, they will only find the facts of the Great Teacher's life, stripped of mere traditions and inventions. Lastly, in humble imitation of the saint, his ambition is "to irrigate the dry land of ignorance and infidelity with the everlasting waters of the Law, sustained in constant flow by the unflawed and unbroken dikes of pious effort."

He begins with a long statement of the pedigree of his hero, which we considerably cut short.

What time the sun and moon shone fair from cloudless skies over the encircling ocean unrippled by any wind, and peace reigned throughout the world, in our country begirt by the Eastern Sea, took place the

birth of one in whom were manifest the thirty-two precious excellencies (Lakchana) of a Buddha-form, whose light was to illumine the darkness of the ages, the Great Teacher, Nichiren.

His ancestor was the divine Amatsu-koyané (one of the gods who allured the sun-goddess forth from the cave into which she had retired leaving the world in darkness), whose descendant Kamatari, in the days of the Empress Kôgiyoku (A.D. 594-655), quelled the rebellion of the Irukas, father and son. The twelfth in descent from Kamatari was Tomosuké, Lord of Bitchiu, who, in A.D. 990, retired to the province of Tôtomi, lamenting that he had no male child. Long and earnestly he prayed the gods to grant him the boon of a son. On New Year's Day, A.D. 1004, he was bending in adoration before the shrine of Igai when the wail of an infant struck his ear. Much marvelling he ran to the spot whence the cry proceeded, and, lying by the side of a well, under an orange tree, found a new-born babe swathed in silk damask. Taking the infant up in his arms, he saw that it was a boy of extraordinary beauty, noble in mien, with eyes bright as the dawn. Overjoyed he recognised the mercy of the gods in the gift, and caused the babe to be carried to his mansion, where it was tenderly reared, and grew to be a strong, brave, and wise man. To him was given the name of Tomoyasu, and one of his descendants, Shigétada, became the father of five sons, of whom the youngest but one was the Great Teacher. About this time, Yoritomo drove his rivals of the Taira faction to the shores of the Western Sea, and, subduing the barbarous tribes of the east, made his capital at Kamakura, whence he threw the radiance of his power over the whole empire. Spies were sent through the provinces to search out the barons of doubtful loyalty, that they might be rooted out of the land just as weeds are plucked up so that the fields may bear better crops. Shigétada fell under unmerited suspicion, and, though his guilt could not be proved, saw his estates confiscated and himself banished to Awa in the year 1203. There the exile dwelt in the fishing hamlet of Kominato, and thus suddenly thrust out from the world, with no one even to help him cook his food—one is reminded of the pathetic song of the negro women in Mungo Park's *Travels*—listened in drear melancholy, night after night, on sleepless couch, to the sigh of the wind among the shore-fringing pine groves. Tired of his solitude, he at last sought for a wife, and Umégiku, a daughter of the Kiyohara house, and of imperial descent, consented to espouse him. Though of noble birth, in her tender love for her husband, she did not disdain from sunrise to sunset to scrape laver off the rocks for his food, to twist hemp for his raiment, and to mend his nets, while he laboured, from dawn to dusk, with oar and net, to provide the means for their maintenance. Thus lived the pair—poorly, but not in poverty—honoured by their humble neighbours, whose children they taught to read and write. From her childhood Umégiku had been a pious worshipper of the gods and Buddha. Each morn, no sooner had the sun, rising over the endless waste of waters,

touched with his earliest beams the window of her cottage, than she performed the ordained ablutions, and with due incense-offering invoked prosperity for her husband and long life for her parents-in-law.

And so time (lit. "light and shade," a Buddhist expression) passed on. Now one morning, with a troubled countenance, Umégiku thus addressed her husband:—

"Last night I had a most strange vision. I dreamed that with my face turned towards the sun, already high in the heavens, I was adoring the glowing orb, the glory whereof grew and grew until it passed description. Then the dazzling globe descended from the skies, and, wonderful to relate! was received in the golden cup of an eight-petalled lotus flower, upborne in which the fiery ball came sailing towards me over the ocean. Nearer and nearer drew the radiant sphere, till it touched me, and then it seemed to me to enter within my bosom, whereupon I awoke, filled with astonishment and fear."

Her husband chided her, but confessed that to him also a marvellous vision had appeared. "Wearied with the day's work," he said, "I fell into a doze, and began to dream; and I saw in my dream a most venerable, white-haired old man, bearing on his out-stretched palm a child of rare beauty. He approached me, and said, 'This child shall be yours, rear him tenderly, and let him be a priest.' Again, and a third time, he stretched out his hand towards me, still bearing the child upon it, and then he vanished and I saw him no more."

Chill autumn and stormy winter came and went, and the year passed away like a dream; and in the spring of the new year, when the second Horikawa, the eighty-fifth of the human emperors, reigned in Kiyôto, and the sway of the Shôgun Yoritsuné, at Kamakura, assured peace throughout the land, what time the plum-blossoms were in their glory and the song of the *uguisu* was heard in the bush, on the 16th day of the 2nd month [of A.D. 1222], about the hour of the horse, a precious male child was born to Umégiku. His coming was presaged by the sudden breaking into flower, though the spring was yet young, of a forest of lotus lilies that covered the surface of a pool near Kominato. On the day itself, amid the greenery of the garden, the earth opened, and a fountain of clear water gushed forth in the very nick of time to serve for the ablution of the newborn infant. Broad was his forehead, high arched his eyebrows, straight his nose, fair his skin, fragrant his breath; apt was the name given to him, Zennichi Maro (the "Fair Sun Child"); and in him was re-born Nichiren, to affront again the corruptions of existence, and bestow upon the three thousand worlds the salvation of the Master-Law, 2171 years after the death of Shaka, a millennium of Pure Law, a millennium of Image Law (fanciful or doctrinal law), and 171 years of Lawless Darkness. Thus from our Japan came to throw its radiance towards the light of the teaching of the Great Teacher, the pure product of his perception of the truth in the Sutra of the Lotus Law, whereof the knowledge was brought eastwards through

the perfect Buddha incarnated in the King of the West, whose death-day was succeeded by the birthday of Nichiren.

The legend of the conception and birth of Buddha is the prototype followed by the hagiologists of the East in their presentment of the manifestation upon earth of the holy men of Buddhism. In the *Lalitavistâra*, or *Sutra of the Lotus of the Excellent Law*, Ananda, the cousin of Sâkya Muni, tells us that Bhagarat, as the Buddha was called previous to his last incarnation, compassionating the condition of existing beings from Bodhisatvas, who had but one more stage of existence to pass through to enter into Nirvana, down to the lowest creatures of the world, determined to be re-born in a human form, and for that purpose to quit the Tushta, or fourth celestial sphere, the abode of the Bodhisatvas, where life endures for 4,000 years, each day of which is equal to 400 earthly years. Out of all human creatures, Mâyâ, the wife of the king of Kapilavastu, the most beautiful, the most virtuous, and the most high-born of women, is chosen as the means of incarnation; and Bhagavat, accordingly, taking the shape of a white elephant (Chinese and Japanese writers say that of a golden, heavenly youth, riding upon a white elephant), is received into her body, and re-born as Gautama, or Sâkya, the last of the seven ancient Buddhas (*Sapta Buddha*). So to the wife of the Emperor Yômei (A.D. 519-586), a priestly form of golden hue appears in a dream, and desires to be born again through her into the world of man. She refuses, alleging her earthly imperfections; but he insists, saying that he comes to bring salvation to men. Whereupon she assents, and, "flying in at her mouth," he is re-born as Shôtoku Daishi. Shinran, in like marvellous manner, is enabled to appear upon this world's stage. His mother is visited by Kuwan-on, the Buddhist Venus (*Amita*, goddess of boundless light), carrying in her hand a branch of the five-leaved pine,* from whom darts a glory that enters the person of the dreamer, who, in due time, gives birth to the founder of the Monto sect, the most influential of all existing Buddhist sects in Japan. In these miraculous stories, as in that of the birth of Nichiren, the endeavour is plainly visible to fuse the Shintô principle of sun-worship with the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism.

Day by day grew the child in stature and in favour with his parents, while none who held him in their arms but for a single moment could forbear from loving him ever afterwards. His intelligence and docility were wonderful. He aided his mother in the work of the house, he rubbed down nik on the stone for his father, and in a thousand ways showed the affectionateness of his disposition. One evening, when the moon was shining brightly without and the lantern was lit within, his playmates gathered round him, boasting of the living things they had picked up on the shore, of the sparrow they had caught with birdlime in the willow copse. The boy shook his head disapprovingly, saying: "A little while ago my father told me a story about a nobleman named

* *Pinus Koraiensis*, probably introduced into Japan.

Yamakayé, who lived at Kiyôto. One day he was walking by the side of a river, where he saw an old man fishing with a cormorant. He had just caught a mud-tortoise, and was about to kill it, when Yamakayé, moved with pity, begged for the animal's life, and gave his cloak to the old man in exchange.* Some time afterwards, the nobleman, being entrusted by the emperor with an important mission, took passage in a ship, accompanied by his family and household. He had a son by a former wife, whom he loved dearly; but the stepmother hated the child, and, watching her opportunity, cast it secretly into the sea. Wonderful to relate, hundreds of tortoises suddenly appeared, and, swimming round the child tossing amid the waves, upbore it so that it was saved. Thus was Yamakayé rewarded for his humanity. Should we not always be full of pity for dumb animals? When you grow up you will take the lives daily of myriads of fish, and this cruelty the way of the world will not let you escape the commission of; but at least, while you are young, you need not kill and plague animals for amusement." But the sweetly-spoken words had no effect upon the dull and loutish audience.

So the years slipped by, and in their son's filial love his parents forgot the pains of exile. In 1226, Masago, the relict of Yoritomo, left the world; the young shôgun was only nine years of age and men thought the outlook gloomy. There were snowstorms in July, so that people had to close their shutters, light fires, and drink *saké* to keep themselves warm in the very middle of summer. Tempests of sleet and hail, and showers of stones, spread devastation throughout the empire, and at the end of the year the name of the period was changed to bring better luck. In 1228 Nichiren attained his seventh year. There were great floods in this year, destroying thousands of men and horses, and followed by bad harvests, pestilence, and famine. At the palace at Kamakura a prodigious flight of strange birds suddenly appeared like pigeons in shape, but black of hue and of ill-omened cry. Neither the clergy nor the laity could make anything of them. Inundations and famine ensued. The Regent issued fifty regulations and ordered the authorities to be strenuous in their exertions to cope with the prevailing distress. Shigétada was greatly moved by this miserable state of things, and said to his wife:

"Our boy is now ten years old, he never quarrels, never takes life, dislikes the flesh of fish or fowl, worships the gods, honours Buddha, and is respectful to his parents. Ten years ago, ere he was born, I was told in a dream to make him a priest. I am now past fifty, an exile though guilty of no crime; in this world I have nothing to hope for, but should our son become a priest he will bring about the redemption of his foregoers as well as attain his own salvation; should we devote him to

* Compare the well-known story of St. Francis of Assisi, whose death occurred a few years after the birth of Nichiren. The Western Saint, meeting a butcher who was on his way to the shambles with a lamb, was moved with compassion, and redeemed the poor creature's life by giving his cloak to its owner.

the service of Buddha will it not be counted to us in the life to come as a deed of exceeding great merit?"

Umégiku, after pondering over the matter, with some reluctance—for was it not life-long separation from her son—consented, and in 1233 the boy was taken by his father to the not distant temple of Kiyosumi (Perfect Purity). Shigétada was careful to consult the almanack for a lucky day, and the journey was made in safety. They were courteously received by the superior, Dôzen, a light of the Shingon sect, a man of lofty virtue and deep piety. He was greatly impressed by the boy's strength and beauty, and by the intelligence of his countenance. He laid his hand on the boy's head and changed his name to Yakuwô (Healing Prince). Zennichi, or Yakuwô, as he was from this day called, was then twelve years of age. He soon became a great favourite with the superior, and rapidly acquired a marvellous dexterity with the brush. "This youth," observed a neighbouring abbot, on the occasion of a visit to Kiyosumi, "will assuredly confer lustre upon our order." He studied the classics of China and the philosophy of Confucius, together with the principles of ethics, and so excellent a scholar was he that he could repeat pages upon pages after reading them twice or thrice as easily as water splashes from a pipe. So extraordinary were his parts that his teachers could not conceive how so gifted a child had been born to parents so lowly, for they knew not the high lineage of Shigétada and his wife.

Meanwhile Umégiku mourned for her little son, and trembled at the thought that perhaps his teachers were harsh to him, making him weep and long for his father and mother. Over and over again, and year after year, she felt impelled to go to him, but did not dare to ask permission; at last, with the sudden courage that feeble woman often shows, she besought her husband, and on a happy day set out for Kiyosumi, taking with her some pears of a kind her boy specially loved, a coat of folded silk, and some under-garments. As she drew nigh, she remembered, all at once, that the temple was one of those whereof women are forbidden to enter within the precincts. In her perplexity she sat down on a rock by the way side, at her wits' end what to do. Just then an old man carrying a load of firewood on his back came in sight. Seeing that he was a servant of the temple, she called to him, and bade him tell her son of her coming, to which the old man nodded assent and entering a dark cedar grove disappeared under a thatched portal. Nichiren could not at first believe the message; had he not abandoned the world, and was it not as vain a task to attempt to search after him as to look for a pebble thrown into the sea? But then, as it was his mother, would it not be an unfilial act to send her away without seeing her? The story of Sôshiu came to his mind, who, when his mother, disconcerted at the arrival of guests whom as a woman she could not properly receive, bit her finger in her perplexity, felt the pain in his own though far afield; so close is the sympathy between a mother and her

filial offspring. So Nichiren, after some further debate with himself, sought the superior, and after informing him of his mother's visit, went out to meet her. No sooner did Umégiku set eyes upon him than she ran to him, and seizing his hand, fell to weeping, so great was her joy. Nichiren on his side was hardly less moved. The sight of his mother recalled his home, he saw again the familiar scenes of his childhood, and his sleeves were wet, but not with the leakage of the summer rain through the verandah roof—though the cuckoo,* telling of the season, was to be heard in the copse. It was hard to quit the world, but was he not acquiring the learning of China and Japan under kindly guidance. So he assured his mother that he was happy. Fortified by his wisdom she bade him farewell and wended homewards. On her way she sat down on a stone by the roadside to dry her tears, and pious pilgrims still halt a while at the spot and remember the grief of the mother of Nichiren.

After his mother's departure the struggle renewed itself in the breast of her son. But his piety carried the day; he remembered the many miseries of the fleeting world, the pains of transmigration, the tortures of hell, and resolved afresh to devote himself to the study and preaching of the Law of Buddha, that the lot of mankind might be rendered less wretched through his exertions.

In 1237, Nichiren, being sixteen years old, was received into the lowest order of the servants of Buddha by Dôzen. The reception-hall of the temple was prepared and all the brethren were assembled; the superior then with his own hands performed the ceremony of the tonsure. The neophyte in a clear voice thrice intoned the Shingon scriptures, then fell his raven tresses, and he exchanged the coloured raiment of the world for the simple black robe of the servant of Buddha, as the son of Suddhódana, departing secretly from his father's palace, laid aside his jewelled cap, and doffing his bright-hued garments, donned a cloak of hempen cloth ere he ascended Mount Dandoku (Dantalôkagiri) and gave himself up to compassionate meditation. The youthful priest assumed the name of Renchô, the Lotus Elder, and immersed himself in the study of theology. How was it, he asked himself, there were so many sects, seeing that there was but one true doctrine of Buddha as there was but one salt savour in the sea? How was wisdom to be attained to discern amid the clash of creeds the true law? Long he pondered over this difficulty without arriving at its solution. At last he bethought him of the shrine of the ancient sage, Kokûzô, who had so often afforded help to earnest searchers after truth. He journeyed thither, and shutting

* *Cuculus poliocephalus*, a miniature species, the note of which resembles the sound ho-tuk-tuk, whence the Japanese name "hototogisu." Unluckily for the bird, it has the reputation of possessing wonderful medicinal qualities, a paste made of the burnt feathers being used as a salve for cuts and wounds, and the bird roasted whole, or reduced to charcoal, being eaten as a cure for consumption, eye-diseases, and other disorders (*Blakiston and Pryer, loc. cit.*).

himself up within the shrine, prayed without ceasing for twenty-one days, that he might gain Buddhistic perception, resolve the differences of the sects, trample underfoot the corruptions of existence, bring salvation to men, and elevate Japan to the position of the wisest of all the countries of the world. To his diligent prayers at last answer was given, and one morning, between night and day, between dreaming and waking, while his senses were yet dim, there appeared to him in a vision a terrible shape like that of an old man with hair white as silver and eyes glowing like hot coals, who held in his right hand a lustrous jewel, a huge precious pearl, which he gave to the worshipper, saying, "Thy prayers are hearkened unto."

Nichiren took the gift and placed it humbly in his sleeve pocket. Then with a noise as of a storm on a hill-top there fell upon him a shower of dew. He looked up and saw a shrine, the golden doors of which were closed by a padlock shaped like a fish, whose sleepless eyes are ever on the watch. Suddenly the doors fell wide open, and this he took to be a sign and symbol of his prayers being heard. With glad heart he turned to descend the steps of the shrine when his breast became constricted, his breath shortened, blood issued from his mouth, his senses left him, and he fell over and rolled upon the ground in a trance. Presently his brethren came to his succour, and bore him home, where they tended him carefully until he recovered from the swoon and was again whole.

Henceforth his intellect took extraordinary development; all clouds were removed from his faculties; the three lights, sun, moon and stars, shone together, so to speak, in the sky of his mind; the whole law evolved itself clearly in his spirit; his eloquence was rapid and dazzling as lightning; with a word he resolved every difficulty. With the blood that issued from his mouth upon the occasion of his trance there passed away from him all the dross and impurity of the world; his six senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and perception), hitherto limited in the darkness of carnality, became infinite under the light of the new grace. He read the complete Scriptures in seven thousand three hundred and ninety-nine volumes, and as he was reading the last of them, the Gospel of *Nirvana*, at the end thereof he came upon the testament of Buddha "*Ye-hô fu-ye-nin*," which being interpreted, means, "According to the Law, not according to Man," signifying that it was in the very Law, and not in the glosses or doctrines of even the best and most learned of men, that the salvation of mankind to the end of time was to be found.

Here we must take leave of the saint thus amply provided with the means of bringing about that reconciliation of the sects and regeneration of mankind which was to be the work of his life.

Brigandage in Macedonia.

CONSIDERING the pitch at which brigandage has arrived in the East, and the number of cases that have lately occurred of Europeans and others being captured and kept in captivity until some fabulous amount has been paid as a ransom, I feel sure that a short account of the daily life and mode of existence of these outlaws cannot fail to be interesting. The following facts are gathered from the experiences of a late captive, at the paying of whose ransom I chanced to be present :—

There is no doubt that brigandage will have a tendency rather to increase than to subside, as long as Turkey remains in its present unsettled condition ; and little else can be expected when one finds nearly everybody, be he pasha, priest, or peasant, either from fear or pecuniary motives, in league with the bands whose headquarters are nearest their respective homesteads ; and one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that bribery and corruption compose the system on which is based the government of a country which, if properly looked after, might be one of the finest in the world.

To begin with, one must know that there are two distinct classes of these men who earn their livelihood by pillage, robbery, and, if necessary, murder : viz. the brigand proper, of whose career I shall chiefly speak, and who very often, notwithstanding his bad reputation, possesses one or two good qualities, amongst which may be mentioned his strong sense of honour as regards keeping his word after giving it ; and an inferior kind of robber who is called by a Greek word signifying "sheepstealer," and who lives by committing petty larcenies, or intimidating, perhaps killing, poor villagers and small landowners, but has neither the pluck nor the organisation to make any grand *coup*, such as carrying off a European or some wealthy merchant. To show in what contempt this latter class is held, I may state that no greater insult can be offered to the brigand proper than that of applying to him the epithet of sheepstealer (*κλεπτιδalos*).

As soon as the spring is sufficiently advanced to allow the mountains to be traversed without too much discomfort from cold, several bands are formed, consisting of Albanians, Greeks, and Armenians, varying in numbers from twenty to forty, the majority of whom are soldiers, well drilled, and accustomed to hard work and long marches, who have deserted from the armies of their respective countries, and determined to pursue a more exciting and lucrative calling. A chief is selected by vote, a Greek generally being chosen, and one who has been at the trade before ; also two or three captains, according to the number of the band, who

assist in organising the recruits, the chief always having complete control over the movements of the band, and settling any disputes that may arise among its members. The next thing to do is to take the necessary oaths, each man swearing not to desert, betray his fellows, or ever assist in any way in a prisoner's escape, the last oath being that, should they be attacked, the captive, if they have one at the time, must not be recaptured alive. This finishes the preliminaries, and the work of cruelty, bloodshed, and pillage commences from thence, and lasts until the winter snows leave the mountain sides no longer habitable, when they disperse and enjoy themselves on their ill-gotten gains till the following spring comes round.

The dress worn by the brigands is much the same as that of Albanian peasants, consisting of a short sleeveless jacket, coarse gaiters and shoes, the national fez, and a very short fustanella or petticoat, the latter being made of very coarse material, instead of white calico, and soaked in oil so as to keep the insects, or at all events a certain percentage of them, from annoying the wearer, as they wear the same one for month after month; and living day and night in the bushes, some precautions seem necessary, and the only course pursued is to take off the fustanella about once a week, and shake it over a fire, the heat causing the lice and other insects to drop out. This is the extent of their ablutions, if such a term may be applied, sometimes for weeks. Across their chests they carry a cartridge belt, and round their waists a girdle containing a revolver, knife, and in fact all their worldly possessions; while by their sides hang their yataghans or curved swords, with which they behead their captives when not ransomed. The rifles vary in kind, but are all very good; I think the Winchester repeating rifle seemed to be the favourite, although a great number are armed with the weapons in use in their own armies at the time they took French leave. It is perfectly astonishing what good marksmen they are, and how ammunition is obtained is a mystery to the uninitiated; but I know for a fact that within the last few weeks a brigand chief ordered and received 8,000 rounds of ball cartridge, of different descriptions, in the middle of the mountains, miles away from any town.

It is unnecessary to detail their plan of attack when determined to carry off a captive, as they all resemble each other, and several accounts have appeared in the papers of those which have most recently occurred. It is a great mistake to think that brigands ill-treat their captives during negotiations; it is just the reverse; all share and share alike, the preference being always given to the prisoner when it comes to the last loaf of bread or the last glass of wine. At the same time it can hardly be called an enviable experience to pass night after night in fair weather and foul with no bed but the mountain side, and no shelter but the canopy of heaven. The routine of one day is so much like that of another during the wandering in the mountains, that a description of one twenty-four hours will, I think, be sufficient. Soon after dark the whole party start,

the prisoner having his arms tied loosely behind him by a single piece of small rope, leaving the end trailing behind. This, I may here mention, is simply used as a sign of captivity, and not as a precaution against an attempt to escape, two of the band being sentry over the captive at a time, the remainder dispersing slightly so as to have due notice of any danger that might be close by. After travelling several miles, through valleys and over mountains, a halt is made about sunrise in some well-wooded and secluded spot; the prisoner is then left in charge of three or four men, and the remainder, excepting of course the chief, proceed with their various duties, some lighting a fire, others preparing the morning meal, which generally consists of bread, coffee, and perhaps a bit of lamb or goat, and another party go off to get their next day's food from accomplices and spies who have been warned two or three days previously where to bring the provisions. So suspicious are they of treachery that no member of the band is allowed to eat any food brought by a spy until the bearer has tasted it to see if it contains poison. The way in which the fire is lighted is well worthy of notice. Having collected some dry sticks, not large in circumference, and about 18 inches in length, a square heap is built by laying them across each other at right angles, and at the same time leaving lots of air-space in the centre. The top stick is then lighted, and the fire burns downwards; by this means a very hot but perfectly smokeless fire is obtained, which of course prevents their locality being discovered from the smoke. When all is prepared breakfast is heartily welcome after the night's journey, but no one thinks of partaking of any food until a short prayer has been said by the chief and all have crossed themselves three times. I have omitted to mention that every band of brigands has a tame ram which is used to lead any sheep they steal from out-of-the-way villages, thus saving one man having the trouble of doing duty as shepherd. During meals every topic is discussed, no distinction being made between captor and captive, nor restriction placed on the latter as long as he does not broach the all-important subject of his own release. On that subject they are perfectly reticent; and one never knows from the day of one's captivity till within a few hours of one's release how negotiations are proceeding, nor how one's chances of life and death fluctuate according to the temper of the brigands and the communications brought by the spies.

During the first week or so after taking a prisoner the camp is moved every night; but as soon as a safe distance is reached and it is known that there are no troops in pursuit, four or five days are often spent in the same spot. On week-days, as soon as breakfast is finished, all the arms are cleaned, knives and yataghans sharpened, and a sheep or goat killed and skinned for the mid-day meal, which generally takes place about eleven o'clock. It is curious to watch the process of cooking the sheep. As soon as the skin is removed, a small portion of the intestines is taken and placed over the eyes and face of the animal, being secured behind the ears by a small piece of stick. This, as well as one or two

other internal portions, is looked upon as a great delicacy, and always reserved for the chief. No portion of the sheep or goat is thrown away, every particle being eaten after being roasted slowly over the camp-fire by being placed horizontally on a long stick and slowly turned round by him whose duty for the day includes cook. Wine takes the place of coffee, but in other respects there is little difference between the mid-day and morning meals.

The first thing to be done as soon as the appetite is satisfied, is to take the shoulder-blade of the animal just devoured and examine the marks on the flat portion of it. Should there be a small hole, it represents the grave of the prisoner, and signifies that the ransom will not be paid; if there appear small lines running in the direction of the leg bone, it denotes that everything will go satisfactorily and the money be paid; but should the lines run at right angles, then pursuit and perhaps capture will be the result of their enterprise. This, among many others, is one of the superstitions in which the brigands put most implicit faith, and by which they profess to be able to discover any news in regard to their success or failure about which they have any doubt.

The afternoon passes much the same as the morning, each taking his turn at preparing food, keeping guard over the captive, and any other little duties that may be required, the remainder sleeping and smoking cigarettes alternately until dinner-time comes round. After their evening meal, all sit round the fire, some playing cards; but the majority seem to find most pleasure in recounting to their captive the most atrocious and brutal deeds of which they have been guilty—the greater the barbarity the more welcome the opportunity of bragging about it. Before repeating one or two of their confessions, I must not omit to say that, although cards are allowed, no gambling, not even of the mildest description, is permitted. It may also appear strange that these ruffians took the most vivid interest in hearing all about the telephone, phonograph, and other new inventions. A late captive informed me that, by giving lectures on different subjects nearly every night for six weeks, he had quite educated his "hosts," and considered the "Turkish School Board" ought to give him some compensation. N.B. It has not done so as yet.

On Sundays, prayers are repeated and psalms chanted during the forenoon; the routine after the mid-day meal being to hang up several sheepskins and practise cutting them in two with their yataghans. This is done, as they calmly acknowledge, to keep their hands in, as, should it become necessary to behead the prisoner, the man to whose lot it falls to deliver the blow is looked down upon if he does not perform his duty neatly, *i.e.* sever the head from the body with one cut.

The system of espionage employed is simply perfect; every movement of troops for miles round is known almost as soon as it takes place, and the state of the negotiations being carried on for the captive's release is immediately and almost daily communicated to the chief. Should any

news be sent by the officials, the usual plan is to send word to the town from which he is coming to say by what road he is to go; then, suddenly, at some unexpected spot, a brigand appears from behind a wall or some other hiding-place, receives his information, and returns; the place of rendezvous being generally four or five hours' ride from the camp, so that no clue should be given as to their whereabouts. It is a law among the bands that no member shall accept a present from a captive; and it is also the custom, on the release of a prisoner, for the chief to make him a present of 50% or so. At the same time, should he have a watch or any other article for which the robbers have a desire, it is bought and paid for, the last ceremony being the taking off of the rope which has bound the prisoner's arms ever since his capture, which once more proclaims him a free man.

To show how little regard is shown to the Turkish authorities, I may here mention that, during my last fortnight at Salonica, a well-known merchant showed me a letter he had just received, the contents of which were to the effect that unless 1,000% were sent at once to a place about three hours' journey distant, all his property, consisting of two houses and a lot of timber, would be immediately burned. This interesting but disagreeable communication was not signed by hand, but had a large seal at the bottom, like an official document, on which was printed in Greek "Captain Kakuni." I need hardly say that troops were despatched in place of the money, but, alas! with the usual result. On another occasion, and within four or five days of the above-mentioned event, I went to the Turkish theatre to see an Armenian company perform a comedy, and passed a very pleasant evening in the box belonging to the commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces. On meeting him the following day he inquired if I knew who was at the theatre with us the previous evening. I replied in the negative; whereupon he produced a small note, in which was expressed the writer's appreciation of the performance, and congratulating his Excellency on the state of his health; but judge of my surprise when I saw the signature "Captain Niko," the chief of the band of brigands who last year captured Colonel Synge! Of course by that time he was probably miles away; but it appears he had donned European costume for the occasion, and quite made an impression with his gloves and small silver-mounted cane. I only know of one decisive step having been taken to suppress brigandage, and that took place a week after the release of Mr. Suter. Salyk Pasha, in command of the troops at Salonica, heard there was a band of brigands in the neighbourhood, and immediately took steps to discover their whereabouts, which he succeeded in doing. Troops were at once despatched to surround the band, and an engagement took place so near the town that the shots could be distinctly heard. The soldiers having previously received orders that they might loot any men they killed gave a greater impetus to the whole proceeding; and before dark, out of a band of thirty brigands, twenty-three heads were brought in to the Pasha, and the re-

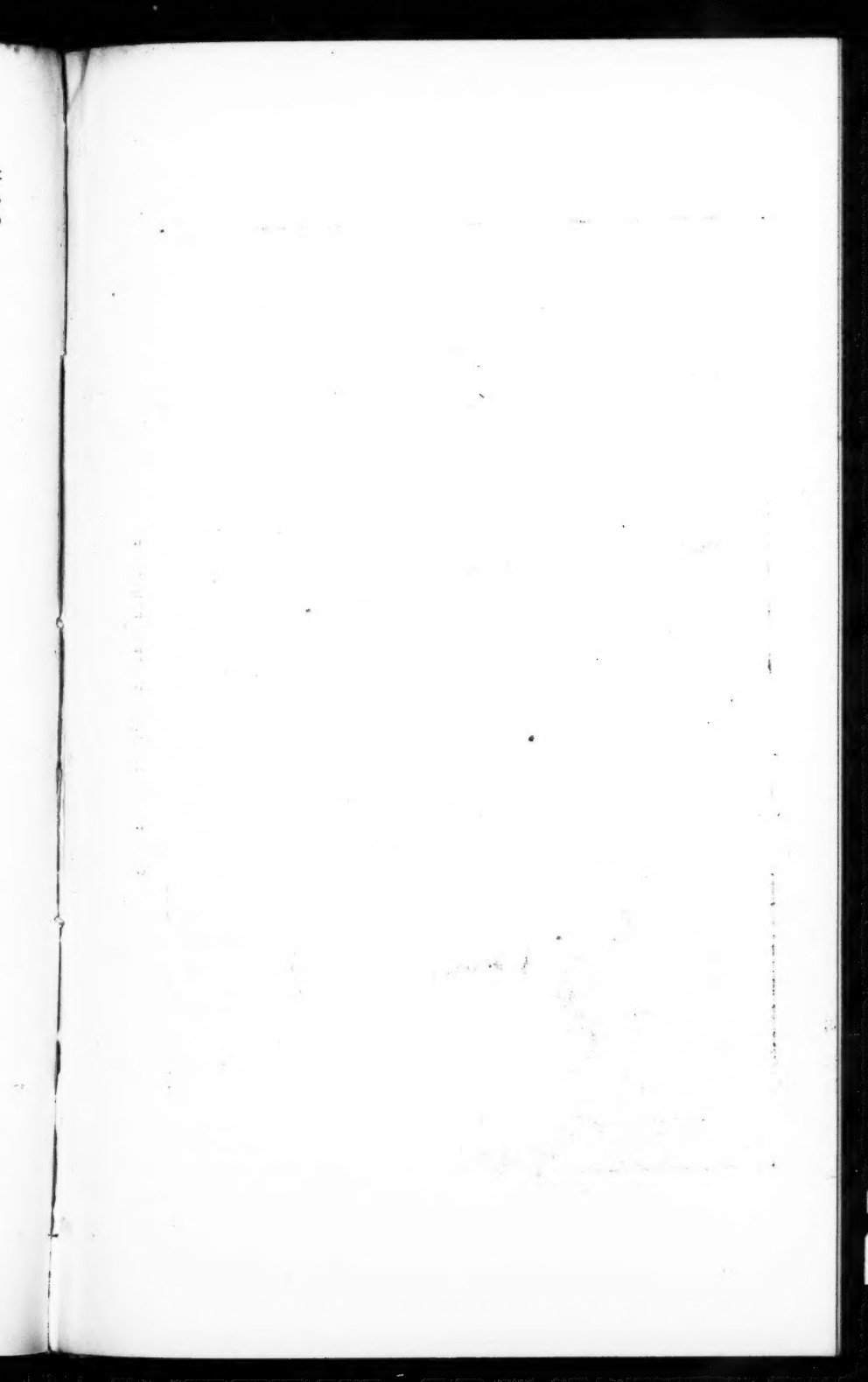
maining seven taken prisoners. One sergeant shot five himself, and took 200% from one man, but he was unfortunately wounded in the affray. However, on his arrival at the military hospital he was promoted to lieutenant on the spot, and every hope is entertained of his speedy recovery. I only regret I was unable to see the head of the rich brigand, so as to discover if it were one of those who received the ransom for Mr. Suter, to the handing over of which I was a witness.

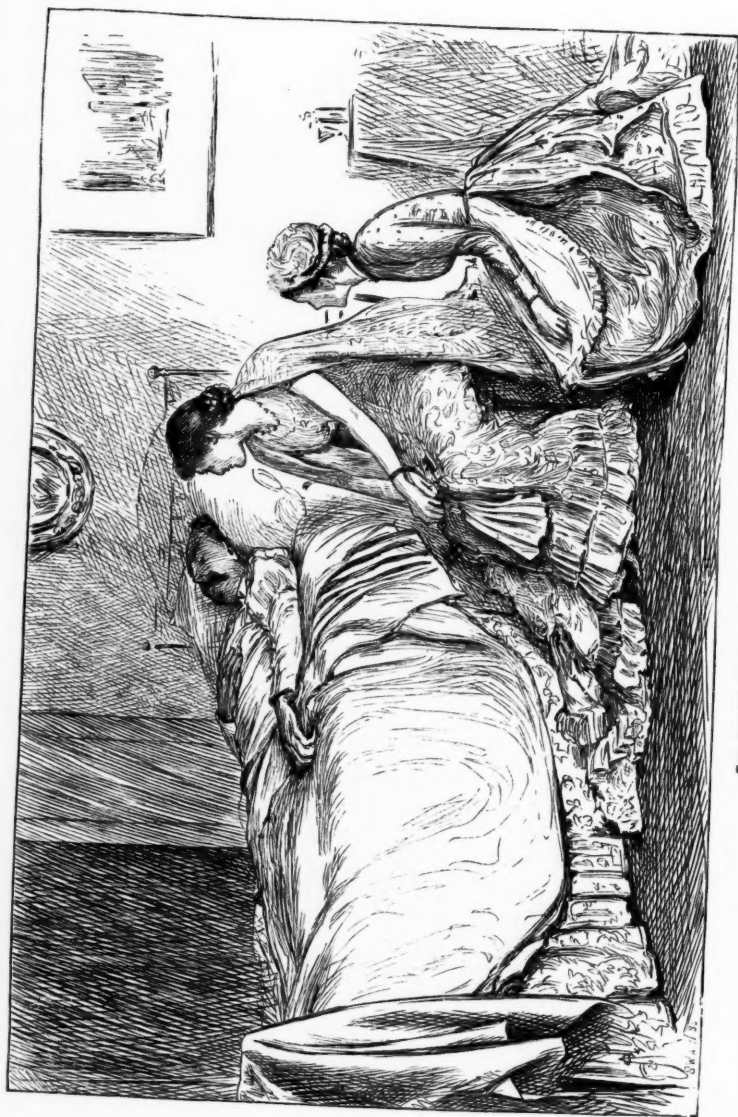
In conclusion, I think that the old motto "*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*" should have due weight with any Englishmen who are purposing to visit the interior of Turkey either on business or pleasure; and I think nothing will give greater emphasis to the advice it contains than giving an idea of the outrageous brutality of those into whose hands they would probably fall, as gathered from the stories told round the camp-fire to pass the time over the after-dinner wine in the mountains.

On one occasion the chief of a band succeeded in capturing a young Armenian whom he suspected of having given information to the authorities as to the whereabouts of his band; whereupon he sent a message to his mother, who lived in a village near, telling her that if she wished to see her son alive she must come at once to a certain spot. Fearing to disobey, the poor woman hurried to the place named where she met the brigand chief, who immediately said, "I have sent for you to show you the way I treat traitors;" and, drawing his yataghan, he cut the wretched man into four quarters before his mother's eyes, adding, as he wiped the blood off his weapon, "Now I am going to the top of that hill. Before sunset you will tell all the inhabitants of your village that they are to come out and see what I have done; should you not obey—and, mind, I shall be watching—I shall come and burn the whole village." Of course, there was no choice but to carry out orders, and come and see the ghastly spectacle.

Another instance, of the effects of which I was also a witness, was that of a villager in the town of Teronda, who, when the village was attacked by brigands, gave up all his property but a small silver cross which he stoutly refused to part with. Whereupon he was stripped, rubbed over with petroleum oil, and then a match applied. It so happened that this did not prove fatal, but the state of agony of the poor man some days afterwards was something piteous to see.

I think these few stories will suffice to show the character of the Greek brigand; and, although as many more and even worse could be repeated, I will only add one which is rather amusing. A band, having captured a Turkish priest, used, when in want of a small amount of amusement, to make him climb up to the top of a tree, and there continue shouting out, "calling the people to prayer" as is their custom from the minarets of the mosques at sunrise; the only difference being that, whereas the real ceremony occupies only a few minutes, this wretched priest had to continue until he was unable to speak from hoarseness and want of breath.



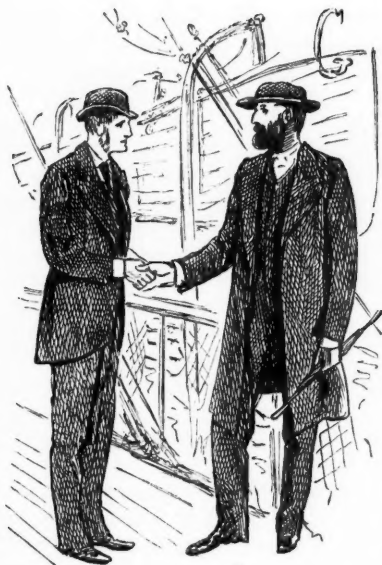


SHE SAT BY HIS BEDSIDE FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT.

Love the Debt.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PENELOPE.



GEORGE'S last words to Lawley as he left the ship was a reminder of his promise to see Mabel often, and report upon her persecutions or otherwise. He had, besides, told him twenty times over of Mabel's delight at the prospect of having such a friend to confide in and advise with, and of her extraordinary esteem for him.

These reports of Mabel's good opinion of him did not lose their effect on Archer Lawley, but their effect was the opposite to that intended by George. It made his friend shrink all the more from the guardianship imposed on him; not, we need hardly say, that he thought

Mabel likely to fall in love with him (he was the least of a coxcomb of any man in England), but that he thought himself likely to fall in love with Mabel. And we do not need *Much Ado About Nothing* to teach us that nothing so disposes a man to love as the reported good opinion of a girl he admires. "Ce qui fait que les amants et les maîtresses ne s'ennuient point d'être ensemble, c'est qu'ils parlent toujours d'eux-mêmes." Now this ever-delightful topic not only cements but creates love; nor was Mr. Archer Lawley more above this human weakness than most of us. Therefore the strong impression Mabel had made on him was by no means lessened by the report of the impression—such as it was—that he had made on her.

There was no help now for it, however. He must go see her, even
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if he has to go with his heart in his hand. Accordingly, half an hour after her return from Minnie's funeral, Mr. Archer Lawley is announced. Mabel had got only three letters from George in four days, and was, therefore, impatient to hear of him from his friend. She rose to greet Mr. Lawley with extreme cordiality, though colouring a little with the consciousness of his mission.

"How do you do, Mr. Lawley? I'm so glad to see you!"

Mr. Lawley made the usual response, and an embarrassing silence ensued. He was nearly as shy as Mabel of introducing the subject of the link which brought them together. At last he mustered up courage to say: "Mr. Kneeshaw commissioned me to bring you this, Miss Masters," handing Mabel a small packet. He had prevented George posting it in order to have a text and a tangible excuse for his first visit. As Mabel took it, blushing "celestial rosy red," and murmured inarticulate thanks, Mr. Lawley's courage proportionately rose, and he proceeded to describe the perfection of the appointments of *The Southern Cross*, George's ship. Mabel listened with breathless interest, and, indeed, would have found something to interest her in a description of the railway carriage in which he travelled to Liverpool. Mr. Lawley having exhausted *The Southern Cross*, bethought him to describe the scene at the station at starting. This also to hear "did Desdemona seriously incline," though she had four pages of minute description of the scene near her heart and nearly by heart. Those great grey eyes looking up at him, wide with a childlike interest and absence of self-consciousness, made havoc the while in Lawley's heart, and warned him to get out of range as quickly as possible. He started up rather abruptly, and held out his hand to take leave.

"Are you going?" in a tone of the most flattering disappointment. "I wanted to hear something of Squire."

"Oh, Squire is as well as he'll ever be," said Lawley, resuming his seat with no great reluctance. "He'll be a cripple for life. I wrote to ask Mr. Pickles to undertake his education and fit him to earn his bread as a clerk or something of that kind, and he has promised to do what he can for him."

"That's very good of him."

"Yes; it's near the election," said Lawley drily.

"To secure Squire's vote? Votes haven't come as low as women and children yet, Mr. Lawley."

She thought Lawley's suggestion uncharitable, and was, besides, rallying his misogyny.

"There are women of both sexes who think with the heart, and act on feelings as on principles, Miss Masters," said Lawley, who would stand to his guns even against Mabel; "and fifty pounds spent on Squire would have more effect than five hundred arguments in making them Whig or Tory."

"But who would hear of it?"

"Who wouldn't hear of it if he did *not* do something for the child? It would be in every opposition speech and placard."

"It seems hard," said Mabel, who had forgiven Mr. Pickles all his rudeness because of his discovery of George's transcendent worth—"it seems hard that because a man is a member of Parliament he should only get the credit of his faults."

"It depends upon the member of Parliament. You see, Miss Masters, with some members their seats are due to their virtues; with others, their virtues are due to their seats. I'm afraid Mr. Pickles' are ex-officio virtues; at least no one ever heard of them till he became a candidate."

Mabel was disappointed to find Mr. Lawley so cynical, and yet it somehow seemed to her that his cynicism was an essential part of his superiority. Her father was cynical, George was cynical; probably, therefore, extreme cleverness and cynicism went always together. All those who eat, as they did, of the tree of knowledge found its fruit, she supposed, bitter and embittering.

"I shall have to fall back upon the woman's argument, Mr. Lawley, which is, you know, to say the same thing over again more positively! I think it very good of Mr. Pickles to provide for Squire,"—with a defiant nod.

Lawley would have been very much disappointed if he had brought Mabel over to his views. He thought trustfulness as becoming in a woman as in a child. In fact, his ideal of a perfect woman was a child's heart and a man's brain, and he fancied he found it in Mabel. How much this fancy was assisted by the loveliness of the face through which heart and brain expressed themselves we shall not say.

"Squire thinks so too, Miss Masters. When I told him of Mr. Pickles' promise it seemed to take a load off his mind. What do you think the load was?—The fear of being a burden to his mother. You see rich people's children haven't even themselves to think for, but even the little children of the poor are made to think for others—nurse the baby, or 'twine' the washing-machine, or 'addle' a penny a day by carrying dinners. Squire's mother seems to have spared no pains to teach him that he had little business to come into the world at all, and none to stay here unless he could 'addle brass.' He told me one day in a burst of confidence that he had saved five shillings. For what?—For his funeral! I broke it to him as gently as I could that the doctor gave no hope of his funeral at all, and that he must prepare himself to live. He took the news very calmly, and simply said he thought then he would spend his five shillings in crutches. However, he changed his mind once more. He again took me into confidence, and told me of the children's presentation to Mr. Kneeshaw, of which he had heard, and to which he wished to devote his whole fortune; but what would his mother say? His mother, whom I sent for, cried a good deal and kissed him and said it should all go and more to it from their Sally; and, as for crutches, he

should have crutches if they were all to pinch for it. Poor little chap! I think I never saw a child so happy as he was when his mother approved of his idea."

Mabel was too much moved to speak for a moment, then she exclaimed, "I should so like to see him," adding hurriedly, "when he gets home again," for she remembered Mr. Lawley's hesitation when Squire suggested her coming out to Fenton to see him. This time, however, Mr. Lawley, with an eagerness about which there was no mistake, hastened to say, "Could you and your aunt come out to lunch on Wednesday next, Miss Masters? I cannot tell you what a kindness it would be to Squire and—and to me."

Where now was his prudent resolve to keep clear of the syren? He was caught in the whirlpool into which George had been sucked, when his friend could not find words strong enough to denounce his folly and feebleness. We need not say that he chose Wednesday because the MacGucken was to spend that day with her sister.

"I should like very much indeed to go," said Mabel, accepting the invitation as heartily as it was given, and attributing the hospitable change in Lawley to his friendship for George. "Perhaps, Mr. Lawley, if it wouldn't be too much trouble," she continued hesitatingly, "you would kindly write and ask my aunt, and say you would be glad to see me too, if she would take me."

The girl blushed at the insincerity of the *ruse* she was suggesting. She had an unfeminine abhorrence of artifice. Lawley, affecting not to see the stratagem of which she seemed ashamed, said lightly, "Of course I shall write to Miss Masters," and hurried on to add, "Do you remember, when Squire wished me to ask you, and how I hesitated then to take this chance of a visit from you? What a Goth you must have thought me! The truth is, Miss Masters, I have a servant—the nurse of my hospital—who is a brute to visitors, and I daren't ask you when she's at home. She will be away on Wednesday, thank heaven!"

Here was a new light let in on Lawley's character! Afraid of his servant! Probably, thought Mabel, he endured her for the children's sake, because she was so excellent a nurse. Anyhow, both his fear of her and his endurance of her went much to his credit with Mabel, as ladies will well imagine.

"You're afraid of her, Mr. Lawley?" her voice expressing the surprise and amusement she felt at the revelation.

"Well, yes; she's like fire—a good servant, but a bad master. As a servant she is everything that could be wished, but as a master——" Here Lawley filled up the aposiopesis with a shrug which spoke volumes.

"But whose servant is she?" for it was evident she stood in the opposite relation to Mr. Lawley.

"She serves tables, so to speak. She is always polishing the furniture. She is a perfect slave to it, and is not happy unless she can see her face in everything."

"That's the vanity of our sex, perhaps, Mr. Lawley. But why don't you give her notice?"

"I did, but she wouldn't take it—for my own sake, she said. She is sent for my good, perhaps," said Lawley, so much in the manner of Mr. Meekins condoling with a bereaved parishioner, that Mabel could not help laughing. His confiding his domestic trouble to her made her feel more at home with him than a month's intimacy would have done. She at first stood in awe of the man whom even her father respected, but his shyness and the deference of his manner to her made him less formidable, and now this confession of his domestic helplessness brought them closer together. Lawley, on the other hand, was himself surprised by the courage of his confidences. He could never have believed beforehand that he would have ventured to amuse Miss Masters with a picture of the MacGucken, but Mabel's own manner was so frank and confiding as almost to force his confession from him. Having now broken the ice he went on to describe to Mabel, with a dry humour which was irresistible, the sufferings he endured at the hands of his enemy. He had the art of saying preposterous things with the solemnity of a preacher. While his tongue was describing ludicrous situations, or painting humorous pictures, his grave, sallow, thoughtful face never moved a muscle, and his melancholy dark eyes seemed to appeal for sympathy. Mabel—herself in some measure mistress of this manner—appreciated it thoroughly, and of course her appreciation of it made Lawley more pleased with himself and with her. In a word, at this first interview Lawley found Mabel even more fascinating than he feared, while Mabel found Lawley all she expected, which was much. When he rose at last to go, she felt as if she had known him for years instead of for days, and expressed this feeling in the frank cordiality of her manner.

"I may tell Squire, then, you'll come on Wednesday, Miss Masters?"

"Thank you; I shall be very glad indeed to go if Aunt can take me, and if Mrs. Mac—ah—MacStinger is certain to be away."

She hesitated over the name in the most natural way in the world, and pronounced it at last as innocently as Lawley himself could have done. The jest, and the manner in which it was uttered, showed the confidential terms on which they had got already.

"I shall make a note of it, or telegraph if Mrs. MacStinger should change her mind," said Lawley laughing, as he took leave.

Miss Masters accepted Mr. Lawley's invitation, and the MacGucken didn't change her mind; nevertheless, Squire was to be disappointed, as we shall see.

Mabel and her aunt were due at a ball the next night at the Sugdens'. Mabel, of course, loved dancing, not the less because, as the belle of Wefton, she had all the best partners competing for her hand. Still she was in no mood to go to a ball to-night, and would have escaped this if her aunt

had allowed her. But her aunt would not allow her. The old lady loved to show herself, feeling with Waller that—

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired.

And as she could not well go without Mabel, she would not hear of her niece moping at home.

Mabel, then, went to the ball bent on being bored and miserable, and as such expectations, like dreams, go generally by contraries, she was shocked to find herself disgracefully happy now and then. She was exquisitely dressed, simply and in perfect taste, how, we dare not attempt to describe. It would be "murder to dissect" (as Bob Sagar would have said) a dress which, like a bird's plumage, seemed a part of the wearer; and since dress adds as much to the beauty of a girl as sun and shadow to that of a landscape, she looked her loveliest to-night. Of course, therefore, she was beset by a crowd of pretenders to her hand for every dance, and had her card filled five minutes after her appearance.

Mr. Clarence Pickles' name figured upon it for two dances. He would have put himself down for five if he could have got them, for Mr. Pickles' passion has grown since we last saw Mabel and him together. They had met two or three times in the interval, and each time Mr. Pickles' passion had "advanced by leaps and bounds," till to-night he was as much in love as it was possible for him to be with anyone besides himself. Mabel too, to-night, was less ungracious to him than usual. She was even almost gracious to him, because she set down to his influence the promise made by his father to provide for Squire.

Therefore she gave him two dances, even waltzes, which he would ask for, though he could no more dance a waltz than a kangaroo. Having no ear, he plunged about to his own time, but took care to mark it for his partner by treading if possible on her foot at each critical third step of the waltz. Mabel's one absorbing aim in dancing with him was to make this impossible by going delicately, like Agag, and not allowing her feet to straggle outside her own lines.

Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared being trapped.

But do what she would she was sure to get so bruised and torn, that after two or three rounds she was fain to give up the struggle and be bored by Mr. Pickles' conversation. Mr. Pickles was at no loss to interpret Miss Masters' preference of a *tête-à-tête* with him even to the rapture of being whirled about in his arms. The girl, like every other girl in Wefton, would catch him if she could. Indeed she had already caught him. Only the fear of his father prevented his surrendering to her before now; but now even the fear of his father was forgotten at sight of her beauty, and at sight also—for this weighed as much with him—of others' admiration of her beauty.

When, then, Mabel after supper had given up an attempt to waltz with him after the third round of the second dance, he was moved to say to her with much expression in his eye-glass, "It's very hot."

"Very," replied Mabel absently, thinking of her absent George. Misfortune brings friends to remembrance.

"So glad you came." This, from Mr. Pickles, was almost equivalent to a proposal.

"Of course I came. Wefton isn't so gay that I could afford to refuse an invitation to a ball, Mr. Pickles."

"Beastly place!" with ineffable disdain.

"Well, I like it; but I know no better, you see." Mabel was giving about a third of her mind and attention to her partner, the rest was wandering far out to sea. Mr. Pickles construed her pre-occupation as the nervousness of a girl expecting a proposal. Even he himself felt nervous.

"It's awfully warm," he said, after a pause for thought of which this remark was the outcome.

"Very."

"Let's go into the conservatory. It's cooler there."

The conservatory opened into the ball-room, and was provided with lights and seats. Mabel mechanically took his arm, with a dim idea of where she was going. Mr. Pickles brought her to the most secluded corner of the conservatory, invited her to sit, and sat down beside her. He was ill at ease. He was as deep in love as it was possible for him to be, but he could not keep down the thought that he was about to make a confounded ass and sacrifice of himself. Meantime the scent and sight of flowers recalled Mabel to herself. She loved flowers and was delighted with the conservatory—a very fine one—and much more interested in its contents than in the conversation of Mr. Pickles.

"What a lovely camellia!" she exclaimed, starting up to examine it.

To understand Mr. Pickles' next move we must remember that he imagined that no girl in Wefton, and least of all a penniless girl, could have any higher hope or happiness than the possession of his hand, not merely and not chiefly because he was heir to 10,000*l.* a year, but also and especially because he was such a perfect gentleman. He saw thoroughly through all Mabel's coqueties, that is, her snubs, rebuffs, and sarcasms (such of them as he understood), and knew perfectly well that they were meant to pique and stimulate him and give the zest of difficulty to his suit. He saw also through her graciousness to-night, which was simply an invitation to the proposal she held to be ripe; and through her distraught manner, which was the natural and becoming expression of her nervousness on the brink of this proposal. All these "tricks of the trade," as he called them to his confidant, Bob Bateson, in the supper-room, Mr. Pickles saw through and forgave, in part because they were "tricks of the trade," that is common to all

women, and in part because Mabel was so beautiful. In fact Mr. Pickles judged Mabel as he judged the barmaid at the "Bell," or any other woman, for he was of the opinion—

Nothing's new beside their faces,
Every woman is the same.

Having, then, this perfect knowledge of Mabel's mind and motives, he proceeded to propose for her in his own simple and direct way. As she bent over the camellia he sprung up, put his arm round her, and kissed her without a word. Mabel turned upon him as much astounded as enraged.

"Mr. Pickles!"

Her look and tone utterly disconcerted even Mr. Pickles.

"I—I mean to marry you," he gasped, confused.

"You—mean—to marry me? You!"

No number of notes of admiration could adequately convey the withering scorn she put into the words. Mr. Pickles looked as confounded as the fisherman in the *Arabian Nights* before the towering genie he had evoked, and was infinitely relieved when Mabel turned her back upon him and marched, stately as a queen, out of the conservatory.

At its door she met her aunt.

"I was just coming to look for you, dear."

"And I was coming to look for you, Aunt. We must go home at once."

"They've told you, then?"

"Told me? No; what?" asked Mabel anxiously, thinking at once of her father.

"Your father has been taken very ill; fallen in a fit, I believe; and the doctor has sent for us. I think he must be dying by their sending for us," said the considerate creature. Mabel stood for a moment, white, with parted lips, stock-still, as if turned to marble, then she hurried through the ball-room, looking neither to the right or left, out into the corridor, down the stairs to the hall door.

"Mabel," shrieked her aunt after her from the stairhead, "you've forgotten your cloak."

"Please come, aunt," cried the girl, with a piteous ring in her voice.

As a footman opened the door, Miss Tubbs, to whom Miss Masters had told the news (as indeed she had told it to everyone she met), and who had seen the misery in Mabel's face, hurried forward, threw her own cloak round the girl's shoulders and kissed her. Miss Tubbs hardly knew Mabel, but the generalissimo had a kind heart, and liked withal to do a striking thing. The delay gave Miss Masters time to come up with her niece and they got together into the doctor's carriage. Miss Masters talked the whole way home very feelingly of her share in the

trouble; how sickness in a house unnerved and prostrated her, and what sufferings she endured while staying with her sister's sick household in Louth. Mabel sat deaf and silent, stooping to look out now and then to see how near home they had got. If her father had spoiled her, would she have been more miserable? Human nature, and especially woman's nature, values even kindness, as it values gold, from its rarity.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RUIN.

WHILE Mabel was dressing for the ball her father was lying struck down by paralysis within a few feet of her. He had lain for hours thus before he was discovered, and would have lain so all night—such was the wholesome dread of intrusion with which he had inspired everyone—if Jane had not ventured in to announce a visitor on urgent business. But the urgent business of the visitor had already been anticipated by a telegram found clenched in Colonel Masters' hand. It told him in twenty words that he was ruined. The Caledonian Bank (Unlimited) had failed for a few millions, with assets of a few thousands, and therefore six of its shares, held by Colonel Masters, would suck with them into the vortex of ruin every farthing he possessed. Yet the Caledonian Bank had been a promising and pious speculation. Its directors were elders of the strictest of all Christian sects—the Scottish Kirk. Its chairman, Gilead Gedge, would not take cream in his tea on the Monday morning, fearing lest the cow from which it came had been milked on the Sabbath day.

Mr. Gilead Gedge had started many speculations, which had failed, as they deserved to fail, through one defect in their foundations—they had not been based upon religion. The Caledonian Bank (Unlimited) being, however, so based, was a magnificent success. It numbered its shareholders by thousands, its capital by millions. Robert Macaire says to his accomplice Bertrand, in one of M. Philipon's caricatures, "*Mon ami, le temps de la commandite va passer, mais les badauds ne passeront pas. Occupons-nous de ce qui est éternel. Si nous faisons une religion?*" Other companies having failed with Mr. Gilead Gedge also, he started the Caledonian Bank on these two sound principles: "*Les badauds ne passeront pas,*" and "*Occupons-nous de ce qui est éternel.*" The bank was to be a strictly religious concern; its directors elders, its shareholders, as far as possible, ministers of religion, or at least those whom the Christian religion binds us specially to consider—the widow and the fatherless and him that hath no helper. To these it gave bread with a full and free hand until unfortunately it failed. But it did fail disastrously—for the shareholder at least—and involved in it the fortunes of our heroine.

When Mabel reached home the doctor assured her that her father

was in no immediate danger, though mind, memory, speech, and motion were gone. She sat by his bedside for the rest of the night in her ball-dress, with a shawl thrown over it, and the ghastly contrast between her face and her costume struck even the unimaginative Jane. The discreet Jane had her faults and her policeman, but had also the merit—if a thing so inevitable can be considered a merit—of worshipping Mabel. She sat, like a dog, on a stool at her mistress's feet for the rest of the night, all Mabel's remonstrances notwithstanding, and in the morning, under the pretence of taking off the incongruous ball clothes before the doctor came, bullied and wheedled her mistress into bed for a couple of hours. However, Mabel was up again and dressed when the doctor did come, and heard his opinion from his own lips. He pronounced her father, to her immense relief, better and likely to live, but certain to have his powers of thought, speech, and motion woefully impaired. It was, in fact, a bad case of paralysis, that true "nightmare life in death." For the rest of his days his body just held together the wrecks and ruins of his mind, and his life, like the light in a Roman vault, shone only to show the pitiable decay of mortality. Absolute death would have been better, but Mabel was thankful for the little life left. By unremitting devotion to him now she might atone for the past unkindness and neglect of which she accused herself—of course without the least cause, for her father had repulsed every timid advance she had made.

As for Miss Masters, her brother's seizure bore hardly upon her. Sickness in a house discomposed and upset her. She was often forgotten in the fuss, and sometimes had no one to talk to or even to attend upon her. Her breakfast was cold often, and often late, and was taken up to her by Jane instead of by Mabel. Indeed she saw nothing of Mabel for three days, since the girl was always in her father's room, and her aunt was too sensitive to face the sight of sickness. Miss Masters, therefore, felt her brother's illness very acutely, and spoke of it with deep feeling to anyone who would listen to her. It weighed upon her so much that she began to think herself in the way, especially when she heard from Mr. Broughton, her brother's solicitor, that every penny Colonel Masters had in the world would be swallowed up in the huge hole Mr. Gedge had been digging out for years. So long as her brother was well off she had, of course, no compunction about living in his house at his expense. But it was very different now. All he and Mabel would have to live on would be Mabel's seventy pounds a year. She couldn't think, therefore, of putting them to the expense of her support any longer. She would go to Bath and try to live upon the pittance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, which was all she had in the world. Thus, as she observed to Mr. Broughton, the kindest thing she could do would be to relieve the ruined household of the expense of her support. When Mr. Broughton had taken his leave, wondering not a little at the old lady's fortitude and philosophy, Miss Masters, in the first flush of her delight at her extraordinary consideration, and also, it must be said, at

the hope of an immediate escape from an uncomfortable house, sent for Mabel forthwith, and told her of her generous resolution. Then Mabel heard for the first time of their ruin.

"All!" she exclaimed aghast.

"All but your seventy pounds, my dear," replied her aunt with a confirmatory nod.

Seventy pounds! Mabel had found it little enough for the little she had to do with it, but to support an invalid father upon it!

"But, Aunt," cried Mabel, with a sudden hope in her voice, "you have something?"

"Yes, dear; only a hundred and fifty pounds a year, but I hope to make it do with management. Don't fret about me, child; I shall get on somehow."

Mabel was silent for a moment, wondering if she understood her aunt. No, she couldn't have understood her.

"You mean we should *all* remove to Bath, Aunt? Is it a cheap place?"

"Cheap! No, indeed, dear. I shall find it hard enough to make ends meet on my little pittance. But seventy pounds a year would be nothing there."

"If we lived together, Aunt," said the girl in a voice that trembled a little, "we should have two hundred and twenty pounds, besides what I might earn by teaching."

What! Another governess in the family, and going out from the house! She could never hold up her head again. To say nothing of being saddled with a helpless invalid.

"If you're bent on being a governess, Mabel, you had much better stay in the North—much better. The salary is better, and—and the position too. And as for taking charge of your poor dear father in your absence, I'm not equal to it; I'm not, indeed."

"I might be a daily governess," urged Mabel, meaning, of course, that then she might take the burden of attendance on her father off her aunt's shoulders.

"So you might, my dear," replied her aunt, nodding approvingly. She considered that she had finally disposed of Mabel's preposterous plan of their all living together, and was only too glad to approve of any alternative. "So you might, my dear, and in Weston, too, where you have plenty of friends."

Weston was a long way from Bath, you see. Mabel was again silent for a few moments. She knew now that she had not misunderstood her aunt at first. She was to be left to struggle with the world alone. Her heart sank at the prospect, but there was no help for it. As for a hope of help from her aunt, it was plain now that there was no room in Miss Masters' thoughts or plans for anyone in the world but herself.

"When did you think of going, Aunt?" asked Mabel, in a cold, proud voice.

"I don't think it's right, my dear, to stay a day longer than I can help. You have so much expense now—doctors, and nurses, and one thing and another—that I don't like saddling myself upon you any longer. I should go to-day if my things were packed," with an air of extraordinary generosity, "but to-morrow, my dear, I shall be off your hands." Miss Masters seemed to expect some acknowledgment of her generous consideration from her niece, but Mabel was most ungraciously and ungratefully silent.

"I suppose that was all you wanted me for, Aunt," she said wearily as she rose to return to her father.

"That was all, dear, except that I was going to ask you to spare Jane for a couple of hours to pack for me."

"I shall send her at once, Aunt."

"Thank you, my dear."

After Mabel had gone, and before her aunt had got together her paintings and other belongings which adorned the drawing-room, Mr. Archer Lawley was announced. Miss Masters explained at once her raid on the glories of the drawing-room by telling Mr. Lawley the whole story from first to last of her brother's seizure and utter ruin, and of her own thoughtful consideration in disburdening the impoverished household of herself. Mr. Lawley had already heard (in Mabel's letter of apology for not keeping her engagement to lunch with him) of Colonel Masters' dangerous illness, but of his ruin he had not heard. Miss Masters' confidences thereabout to a comparative stranger were not in the best taste, but she had really talked herself into a belief in her own considerateness, and was as proud of it as everyone is of a feat in a field wholly foreign to him. Lawley, however, knew her well enough to feel sure she was ratting. He made no reply whatever to her confidences, but started up and walked backwards and forwards in a quick, disturbed way, as if he was in his own room. In fact, he forgot Miss Masters for the moment altogether. Miss Masters was not a person to allow herself to be altogether forgotten, so she brought Mr. Lawley to with the shock of a startling announcement.

"I'm going to-morrow, Mr. Lawley, and I don't suppose I shall ever come back to Wefton again."

Lawley was brought to. He stopped opposite Miss Masters and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Miss Masters. It's *very* kind of you to leave them now."

"I couldn't bear to be a burden to them, you know," she replied with absolute self-complacency.

Lawley walked slowly and meditatively downstairs, opened the hall door, shut it, stood for some seconds on the steps, and then turned and rang the bell again. Jane looked rather surprised at this quick succession of visits.

"Could I see Miss Mabel Masters for a moment?"

He looked so troubled that Jane had no hesitation in saying : " Yes, sir. Please come into this room, sir," showing him into the nursery.

Lawley having asked before by mistake for Miss Masters, Jane did not think it necessary to intrude into the sick room and mention his visit to Mabel, who knew nothing of it therefore. Now, however, when Jane told her of both visits, she felt a relief which would have been the sweetest flattery to Lawley, if he had known of it. She had only just heard of their ruin and was still stunned by this second blow, and in her utter friendliness and sore need of advice Mr. Lawley seemed heaven-sent.

" How do you do, Mr. Lawley?" in a voice that failed to sound cheerful.

Lawley said nothing, or rather spoke only through the yearning and wistful expression in his dark eyes, holding her hand in his for a moment after he had shaken it. It will be seen that his courage had risen astonishingly, but trouble is a great leveller, and Mabel didn't somehow seem so far off from him now. The depth of silent sympathy expressed in his face was too much for Mabel, after four days and nights of misery, during which she had hardly slept or eaten, and could not shed a tear. Nothing melts a heart thus ice-locked like sympathy. It is deep calling unto deep ; and Mabel, do what she would, could not keep back now the tears she could not weep before. She turned away to the window, ashamed of her breakdown, and wept silently for a few moments. Lawley, also silent and reverent as if her grief hallowed the room, leaned his elbow on the mantelpiece, looking for a moment with a profound depth of sadness in his eyes at the girlish figure averted from him, and then he turned to steal from the room and from the house, to come again to-morrow. He knew that Mabel had broken down unexpectedly and in spite of a desperate effort to control herself, and he felt it profanity to intrude on so sacred a sorrow. Mabel, hearing his hand upon the lock, turned quickly and cried anxiously : " Don't go, Mr. Lawley. I want to speak to you. I want to ask your advice. I've nobody——. You'll wonder that I come to you ; but you're always kind to those in trouble, Mr. Lawley, so I've a claim on you, like Squire," with a wan smile.

" If you *would* let me be of use to you?" pleaded Lawley with perfect sincerity, reversing the situation and becoming the suppliant. Indeed, there was a depth of earnestness in his tone and look which surprised and touched Mabel greatly, and which drew her towards him as towards a brother.

" You're so generous," she exclaimed, surprised out of this direct compliment, and looking up to him with a glow of admiration in her face. Poor Lawley felt rebuked by the undeserved praise. He generous! What would she or George think of his generosity if they saw his heart. " But," she hurried on to add, seeing his embarrassment, and attributing it to his dislike of compliment, " you don't like being thanked even." She paused for a moment and then resumed. " I have just heard of

another trouble. My father had some shares in that bank which broke. But you have heard of this from my aunt?" reading Lawley's face with her usual quickness.

"Yes; she told me," with a ring of bitter contempt in his voice, which Mabel was at no loss to interpret.

"Do we lose everything?"

"I'm afraid so."

"I thought perhaps aunt might have misunderstood Mr. Broughton."

"I'm afraid everything goes—at least, everything of your father's."

"There's very little else," she said, looking with a thoughtful and troubled face into the fireplace, while her hands lay listlessly together in her lap. "I do so wish I had been brought up to do anything. I'm only fit to be a nurse. I'm too ignorant for a governess. I don't know anything of drawing, or music, or German, or Italian," looking up into Lawley's face with childish simplicity and sincerity.

"No; you're not fit to be a governess," said Lawley, starting up brusquely and fiddling impatiently with one chimney ornament after another. "You don't know everything and nothing. Besides, you're not fit in any way—not in any way," his face and voice suddenly softening, as he reiterated the words, into the most unexpected expression of tenderness, like that of a mother soothing a sick child. Mabel, who was drinking in the words of the oracle with absolute faith, could not, with all her modesty, help seeing that he thought her much above and not below the position, and that he had an interest in her of which she never dreamed.

"But what can I do? I must do something, Mr. Lawley."

"Miss Masters, if you were my sister, and had to make your way in the world, I should say, 'Take a school.' Not a young ladies' school, mind. A national school. You would be absolutely independent and would do an incalculable amount of good." A national schoolmistress, like Miss Pochin!

"A national school!" faltered Mabel.

"Yes; a national school. There is no other position that I know of in which a woman can do so much good and be so independent. You'd never be happy in any lower position—certainly not as a governess or as the mistress of a young ladies' seminary."

Here was a revolutionary reversal of civilised ideas! A governess or the mistress of a seminary for young ladies ranked below the mistress of a national school! Mr. Lawley was a Radical in many points, and in some an eccentric Radical. He judged of a position by the influence it would have on oneself and on others, rather than by its respectability in the eyes of Mrs. Grundy. Mabel was silent for a moment, taking in this new idea and looking at it from all points. The more she thought of it, the less she disliked it. It was certainly a position in which she could do most good to those who needed it most, with the least loss of independence and self-respect. She would have to do also with the children of

the poor towards whom she had always felt a yearning. But, was she qualified? You might be a governess, or the mistress of a seminary for young ladies without knowing anything, but you must know something and pass some examinations to be a national schoolmistress.

"But you must know something?"

"Yes; you must know something; but nothing that *you* don't know already, or couldn't master in three months."

Mabel was again silent for a little.

"And there's a long apprenticeship, isn't there?"

"No; not necessarily. If you like you can act as assistant mistress for six months and then pass. Or you can give a lesson before the Inspector and qualify to sit on his certificate." Lawley hid his heart as he could under a business-like manner, but the impression which Mabel, looking up suddenly, caught in his face, belied his brusqueness.

"Do you remember my saying, Mr. Lawley, that I couldn't think of coming to you except on crutches?" she said, answering the more than kindly and compassionate look she caught in his face with a smile of inexpressible sweetness. "I didn't know then how soon I should have to come to you on crutches—or," she added hesitatingly and diffidently, "that you would have been like a brother to me."

"I've been like a brute to you!" broke in Lawley, with a most unusual impulsiveness; "I've spoken of you—*you* becoming a national schoolmistress almost as if it was your natural position. Whereas——" Here he pulled himself up with an effort and a jerk, and, diving his clutched hands deep into his trousers' pockets, turned his back upon her, and walked to the window. The most subtle and exquisite flattery could not have said so much as this blunt outbreak and break-off and impulsive turning of his back upon her. This Mr. Lawley, the cynic and misogynist! "Still," he continued, after a pause, facing her, but replying rather to his own thoughts, "still, it's no degradation even to you. You will be absolutely independent. You'll have only your own conscience to fear and serve. And there's no end to the good you can do where it's most wanted—to the children of the poor. School is their one chance, and our one chance with them. And the influence of such a teacher as you would change their whole lives and last their lives, and be passed on still to their children. A few such teachers in each of our large towns," he exclaimed enthusiastically, "would do more good than all the churches." Lawley was not merely justifying his advice, but airing a crotchet of his own. He had an inordinate idea of the importance and influence of elementary teachers, who had to do with plastic material, and who were, he held, the real clergy of the poor. And the position itself he considered intrinsically higher than that of the highest paid or placed governess. Still, though he held it the best position open to Mabel, his heart bled for her as he looked at the worn and wan face, and thought of the troubles that had come so thick upon her, and of the dreary, if divine, drudgery before her. "At worst," he continued, still answering his

own thoughts, "it is the less of two evils. It's at least better than being a governess."

"You've convinced me that the position is above me and not below me," said Mabel with one of her old smiles; "but I think of Miss Pochin and take courage."

"I spoke of the position, not as Miss Pochin has made it, but as you will make it."

"I only wish I could."

"You will," said Lawley dogmatically; "that is, if you've made up your mind to try it at all."

"Yes, I've made up my mind; or, you've made it up for me, Mr. Lawley. I don't know how to thank you, but you would need no thanks if you knew what strength and courage you have given me. I cannot tell you how lost and lonely I felt just before you came—before you were sent to me," in a low and reverent voice. "But everything looks different now. You'll come again soon?"

"I shall come to-morrow," he said, holding the little hand longingly in his own, and looking wistfully into the trustful and thankful face upturned to his. "Good-bye."

Mabel hurried upstairs to thank God for so speedy an answer to her prayers, while Lawley set off to seek Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FRIENDS IN NEED.

MR. WOODWARD, H.M. Inspector of Schools for the Wefton district, was an old college friend of Archer Lawley's. He had beaten Lawley in every Academic battle; for being plodding and painstaking, and doing almost as much in a month as Lawley did in a week, and working more months than Lawley worked weeks, he won every race by a neck. For all that he looked up to Lawley as a man who, though he did and was nothing, might have been and done anything, while Lawley respected in him the slow but sure intellect, the cautious judgment, and the conscientious industry in which he was consciously so deficient himself. So the two kept up still their old friendship, all the firmer—like a mortise and tenon joint—for the one being the complement of the other.

To Mr. Woodward, then, Lawley at once repaired upon quitting the Grange, knowing this to be the hour in which he was most likely to be at home. He was not disappointed. Mr. Woodward was at home, and disengaged, and only too glad to take the walk to which Lawley invited him, expecting, of course, a battle on any or all of the subjects in constant dispute between them. What was his amazement to hear Lawley speak only, and speak highly, of a woman! Lawley thought himself justified under the circumstances in confiding to his old friend

Mabel's engagement to Kneeshaw, their separation and its cause, as well as the hopeless illness and ruin of her father. He then described Mabel in such terms of praise as took his friend's breath away (for Lawley's contempt of the sex was one of the subjects on which they habitually fought), and wound up with her intention, on his advice, to take a national school. Mr. Woodward was not in the least surprised at Lawley's advice, for he knew, and even shared his friend's ideas on this point; but he was very much surprised by Miss Masters' acceptance of it. She must be an extraordinary girl, he thought, of whom Lawley can so speak, and who had the sense to take such unpalatable advice.

"Now I'll tell you what you must do, Woodward," said Lawley impetuously. "You must see Miss Masters when she is able to see you, and you must tell her all about the examination. Perhaps she'll let you prepare her for it," he interrupted himself to suggest, as if H.M. Inspector must think it a priceless privilege to coach Miss Masters.

"I don't think I could find the time," objected Mr. Woodward.

"You'll find the time, when you know her," rejoined Lawley decisively.

He was right. Next day Lawley called on Mabel according to promise, and arranged for her interview with Mr. Woodward on the day but one after. On that day Mr. Woodward, expecting great things, called, and was not disappointed. He lingered out the interview as long as possible, explained everything in the minutest detail, and at its close begged as a favour to be allowed to help Miss Masters in her studies. The offer was all but irresistible to Mabel, who had the deepest distrust of her own powers, but she could not be so unreasonable as to accept it. Mr. Woodward, seeing her reluctance was due only to consideration for him, pressed the offer upon her so cordially that she was forced to accept it. She would not hear, however, of his coming to the Grange, but insisted, and at last carried her point, that she should go to his house. So it was finally arranged that she should go once a week to Mr. Woodward's, an arrangement of which Mrs. Woodward was pleased to approve. Indeed, that impulsive and rather fussy matron, hearing from her husband the story of Mabel's troubles, called and made friends with her, and always took care to be out driving casually in a cab, and to pick up Mabel quite incidentally on the day when she was due at her house. She was jealous indeed of the length of lesson her husband gave Mabel, but jealous only because it left herself so little time for a chat with her charming *protégée*. For Mrs. Woodward, with all her kindness of heart, was a patronising little person, and would always treat Mabel—who at ten had more sense than Mrs. Woodward had now—as a child. If Mrs. Woodward had known Mabel a fortnight ago, she would have formed the precisely opposite impression of her; but by some curious confusion of thought, the helplessness of misfortune was confounded with the helplessness of childhood in her mind, an impression much assisted by the fact of Mabel's taking lessons like a school-girl.

Mabel accepted the assigned position gravely and gracefully, and found some relief from the set grey sadness of her life in those days in playing at being a child in Mrs. Woodward's company.

"Well, my dear, how have you done to-day?" the little woman would ask when Mabel came out of the awful study of H.M. Inspector.

"I've been a good girl, Mrs. Woodward," Mabel would answer, resisting the temptation to say "a dood dirl," but looking as if she should have said it, that is, with the wide intense eyes and grave nod of a little child. She would have made a consummate actress. Mrs. Woodward, who was constantly zigzagging like a butterfly about the room, making for one thing, and then, midway, checking herself and darting aside for another, would nod her head approvingly.

"That's right. Now sit down and have a cup of tea." She would always have cake for Mabel—all children liked cake—and would set her chair at the proper distance from the table, and all but help her on to it. When Mabel sat down, Mrs. Woodward, standing by her, could reach her head, and would smooth her hair caressingly with her hand before she sat down herself.

"You'll find the tables hard. I did, when I was at school, and the geography, especially the definitions, but we used to christen the girls by them and remember them in that way. I still write to Lydia Parker 'My dear Isty,' short for Isthmus, you know; she had such a long thin waist. It wasn't right, my dear," fearing Mabel might take to such demoralising mnemonics, "but we don't always do what is right."

"I know all the definitions, Mrs. Woodward," said Mabel, with some natural triumph in her tone and look.

"Do you, my dear? Mr. Woodward says you're very clever. He says—but it wouldn't do to tell you all he says about you; it might make you vain. And cleverness isn't everything. I wasn't thought clever at school."

Mabel had to look amazed in common politeness.

"No, my dear, I wasn't," nodding her head positively, as asseverating an incredible statement. "They used to call me 'the Claimant,' not only because I was stout, but because of my 'impositions.' I had ever such a lot of impositions to do—you can't think. That's why I'm so good at history. I think I have written out the names and dates of the kings and queens of England five hundred times at least. Every girl ought to know history, the names and dates are so important. You know history, my dear?"

"A little."

"I should study history if I were you," speaking very earnestly, and *ex cathedra*, as an expert. "If you wrote out the names and dates of the sovereigns of England so many times every day you would soon get to know it."

"And the battles?" suggested Mabel. She would take herself to

task afterwards for ingratitude, pertness, flippancy, &c., but the temptation at the time to play the child was irresistible.

"I don't think I had the names and dates of the battles to write out," replied Mrs. Woodward thoughtfully, "but the genealogies I had. I remember when Mr. Tinling, the clergyman, examined us in history, I was the only one in the class that could give the genealogy of Edward III., and how he claimed the crown of France. I forget how now. Through another mother, I think," reflectively.

"How many had he, Mrs. Woodward?" asked Mabel, with perfect composure.

"I forget it all, now, my dear. Not as many as Henry VIII.—those were wives, though. No; I can't remember, now," shaking her head impatiently. "But I got the prize then for history. I have it still, beautifully bound and full of dates—'Maunder's Menagerie'—a very clever book."

Mabel had to keep silence, to keep her countenance at this happy confusion of Maunder of Menagerie fame with his namesake of the "Treasury," and at the still happier description of that brilliant and original work as "a very clever book."

"But you haven't eaten your cake," continued Mrs. Woodward, who could not endure a moment's silence.

"I don't want any, thank you, Mrs. Woodward."

"Not cake? You shall have some jam, then," in a tone not unlike that of a soothing nurse, "It shall have its jam, then."

"But I haven't brought my pinafore, Mrs. Woodward."

"Your 'Pinafore?' We have a copy of it, my dear, if you'd like to play for me. Do. I should like very much to hear you; I should, indeed."

Mrs. Woodward was under the impression that Mabel, like any other child, was eager to show off her latest accomplishment or acquirement.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Woodward. I didn't mean the opera, and I can't play it. Besides, I must get home, as I expect a friend this evening. I feel your kindness very much," said Mabel, taking and holding the little woman's hand. The words were not much, but the tone and look were as tender music to them, and gave them expression. Mabel, as usual, towards the end of her visit was filled with compunction for what she felt to be ungrateful ridicule of her hostess, though in truth it would have been hard to accept Mrs. Woodward's grandmotherly patronage seriously.

"My dear, you deserve kindness," raising herself on tip-toe to kiss Mabel and pat her on the cheek. "And I've got you a little present," handing her a small parcel which Mabel had seen her take up and put down again furtively and fidgetingly half a dozen times. Mabel half expected it to be a doll, but it turned out to be a very pretty little housewife, with the one disadvantage that the thimble &c. were too small

for even Mabel's fingers. "You mustn't look at it till you get home. I hope you'll learn to use it, my dear."

When Mabel had thanked her, and was leaving the room, Mrs. Woodward first trotted to the bell to ring for the servant to show the visitor out, and then hurried after her to show her out herself, chattering the while. She was "left speaking," in fact, like the House of Commons, and even when Mabel had got almost to the bottom of the dozen steep steps that led up to the hall-door, Mrs. Woodward called after her, "My dear!"

Mabel was back in a moment.

"You needn't have come back, my dear. I was only going to tell you to be careful in going down the steps. They are so steep, and it was only the other day I saw in the paper that a poor old woman in Manchester had slipped on a piece of orange-peel on the pavement and broke all her eggs and her ankles, and was taken to the Infirmary. You can't be too careful, my dear."

Certainly Mrs. Woodward was mistress of the art, which is described by no less venerable and ponderous an authority than Hierocles as "getting on horseback in a ship"—a happy example of fuss.

The friend whom Mabel was at last allowed to hurry home to see was Mr. Robert Sagar. Mabel had written to him in the first days of her trouble, but got no answer, and knew, therefore, that her note had not reached him, rightly conjecturing that he had left London. He had left London to roam here and there over the Continent, as chance, or a chance companion, might lead him, and found Mabel's letter on his return. He telegraphed at once to explain his silence, and to promise to be with her the same evening. It was a generous promise. Mr. Sagar completely conquered and suppressed himself in making it, for he imagined Miss Masters still at the Grange. Mabel, having nothing good to say of that estimable lady, had made no mention of her in her letter, and Mr. Sagar therefore was almost as much disquieted about his own prospects as about Mabel's, when he had time to think things over in the train. What about "Rebecca?" How was he to face, or rather flee her? He had almost put in the telegram an announcement of his marriage, accounting for his absence from town by his honeymoon, only he couldn't bring himself to tell a lie, or at least, *that* lie, to Mabel. He thought with much perturbation and perspiration of the case of his friend Dick Burkitt, an old Indian and an old bachelor like himself, and like him, too, retired, who was advised to marry and even whom to marry—a Manchester maiden with a lac of rupees to her dower. Dick ran down to inspect what Sir Anthony Absolute calls "the live stock on the estate," and promised to report to Bob the results of his inspection of the heiress. Accordingly, two days after Dick's departure Bob received, not a letter, but this terse telegram: "She's as old as the devil."

Two months after he saw in the *Times* the announcement of his

friend's marriage to this very maiden. Still, there's the lac of rupees thought Bob. If his friend had married the devil, at least it was a consolation to remember Milton's assurance,

That riches grow in hell.

But his shamefaced friend, being met by him shortly after, and congratulated upon the lac of rupees, replied with a laconic bitterness :

"A plentiful lack."

"What! Hadn't she a fortune?"

"A thousand pounds, Bob, in Consols, all told. Thirty pounds a year; cigar money if I smoked. But I've given up smoking since I got married," continued Dick dismally, "so I may call it sixty pounds a year."

"You'll be giving up living next. There's a deal to be saved in that way, my boy;" for certainly Dick seemed to have suicide in his eye. "Look here, old fellow," continued Bob, linking his arm sympathetically in Dick's, "we've known each other a matter of twenty years, so you'll not think me intruding on you in your trouble if I give you a word of advice. Ease the boiler a bit; let it off through the whistle; it'll do you good."

Then Bob heard the tale which now flung him into a perspiration. For it seems his friend's case was precisely analogous to his own. It was the old lady's niece who was the heiress, as Dick found a fortnight after he had telegraphed to Bob, and before he had fully committed himself; yet he married the aunt. How, he couldn't say. She had misunderstood something he said as a proposal, and he couldn't get out of it somehow. He did buzz about a bit and shake the web, but it was no use.

"And after all," concluded Dick, with a sigh like a sob, "it might have been worse, Bob. She's religious, and has the devil's own temper, but she makes first-rate curries."

Bob was so touched by the frankness of his friend's confidences, and so struck by the astonishing similarity of the case even in detail to his own, that he made in turn a clean breast of his miraculous escape from Rebecca.

"By George! the same trick. The confidence trick!" cried his astonished friend. "I'm hanged if they're not taught it at school. Those girls' schools are the mischief, Bob. But look here, my boy, do you remember how we bagged 'Auld Cloots'" ("Auld Cloots" was a man-eating tiger). "We tied a calf to a tree as a bait, and potted Clootie in act to spring on it. Keep clear of the calf, my boy, or it's all up with you."

Bob was not well pleased to hear Mabel so described, but after all, Dick's being a sin of ignorance, as he didn't know Mabel, was venial, not mortal, and he was any way pardonable as being pitiable. Besides, the advice was certainly sound, and it was this sound advice that now recurred to him and disquieted him. But though Mr. Sagar was not in some

respects a man of the most refined feelings, as might be inferred from his intimacy and this conversation with Mr. Burkitt, he was essentially generous, and even chivalrous, and did not repent of going upon this forlorn hope to the relief of Mabel.

Having reached Wefton and recruited himself at the "Queen" with some dinner, he took a cab to the Grange, but did not pay the driver until he had satisfied himself that Mabel was at home. He daren't risk walking back in case Rebecca was at large.

"Is Miss Masters at home, Jane?"

"Yes, sir."

"I mean Miss Mabel;" standing like a Janus with one side face towards the open door, and the other towards the cab, for she might be upon him at any moment, and he must pretend not to see her.

"Didn't you know, sir? The old lady's gone, sir," said the discreet Jane, with a guarded grin. She had made merry many a time over Mr. Sagar's headlong flight, the cause of which she had penetrated through a keyhole.

"Gone! To London?" cried Bob with a new alarm in his voice.

"No, sir. To Bath, sir."

Bob looked doubtfully at the Discreet, suspecting her of wit. Living much in hotels, he had a vast intimacy with pert barmaids.

"Ordered there?" he asked jocosely, to draw forth the lurking jest, if there was one. But no, there wasn't. The Discreet looked by no means humorous, but wroth rather.

"No, sir; because her breakfast was late, sir, since Master was took," venomously; for Jane had had most to do with and most to hear and to bear about this grievance.

"You took it late to her?" asked Bob in wild spirits.

"Yes, sir," rather doggedly.

Bob could have kissed her, and would, too, but for the cabman. He couldn't however resist chucking her under the chin with one hand, and presenting her with half-a-crown with the other.

"Bedad, if you'd only kept her dinner late, you might have sent her to Jericho."

Jane didn't understand this as the superlative of "going to Bath," but she quite understood Mr. Sagar's high spirits, his caress, and above all his half-crown. It wasn't the first half-crown she had had from Mr. Sagar, nor the first caress either. Mr. Sagar, having made the cabman rejoice with him by a bounteous over-payment, followed Jane up to the dismantled drawing-room. It looked like a plucked peacock, as of course Miss Masters had not left a single feather behind. Mr. Sagar dwelt on every token of her fair absence with a lover-like delight. The old lady, we need not say, had taken care to let him know that all the glories whose absence he gloated over were the work of her own hands. He was not, however, left long to these sentimental musings, as Mabel at once hurried in to see him.

"I knew you would come," with such a bright welcome in her face and outstretched hands, that if Bob hadn't been in love with her he must have kissed her.

"Come! I should have come from India. How's your father?"

"He's as well as he ever will be, Mr. Sagar, the doctor thinks. He's as helpless as a little child," and far more fractious, she might have added, for she was tried, and tried sorely, by his ceaseless petulance, and frequent, violent, and causeless outbursts of passion. Bob looked sadly at the sad face.

"I suppose it was this bank?"

"Brought it on? Yes, I think so. The telegram telling him of the failure was found clenched in his hand."

"It's utter ruin?"

"Everything goes, except seventy pounds a year. But I'm going to make my fortune, Mr. Sagar," with a smile, but not without trepidation. She could defy Grundy, Roxby & Co.'s disapproval, but not Mr. Sagar's.

"You?"

"Why not? We have made our way into the professions, you know," with an assumption of sauciness.

"A doctor," thought Bob, and his heart fainted within him.

"Not a doctor," said Mabel, answering what she knew would be his first thought. "A schoolmistress."

"Hwhat!" like a shot from a gun, and in a brogue as broad as the Shannon at Kerry Head. His one idea of a schoolmistress was Miss McCormack of Ennis—a griffin. His lively imagination tried in vain to picture Mabel "old and formal, fitted to this petty part."

"A national schoolmistress," Mabel hastened to add, to get it over.

"Who's put this into your head, Mabel?" in a lamentable voice.

"Mr. Lawley thought it would be pleasanter than being a governess, and I quite agree with him. Don't say anything against it, Mr. Sagar," pleaded Mabel persuasively; "I've set my heart on it."

As, indeed, she had. She had got it into her wise head that it was a kind of missionary work to which she was called. Bob, too, thought it was some idea of this kind, put into her head by a pet parson, which made her so bent upon it.

"Hang those parsons," he muttered bitterly. "They think no one can get to heaven without peas in his shoes." But aloud to Mabel he said, with a sudden change to tenderness in his voice and face, "Mabel, your mother left you to me on her death-bed, and now that your poor father is helpless, I claim the right to take care of you. You're my ward, dear," he said, taking her hand in one of his while his thumb moved back and forward over it caressingly. He forgot for the moment even his love in his pity. "I cannot let you do this—this degrading thing."

"I'm so sorry you think it degrading," she said humbly. Mr

Sagar's tenderness disarmed her of argument. "I don't think it's more degrading, or so degrading, as being a governess."

"But why should you be a teacher at all, Mabel? Why shouldn't you let me take care of you, and be a father to you? It was your mother's wish, dear—her dying wish."

"Father!" It was the hardest word in the world for poor Bob to speak, but it was spoken bravely and sincerely.

"Dear Mr. Sagar, I cannot say what I feel about your great goodness to me. But I do feel it. I do with all my heart. You will be to me, I know, dear friend, all that my mother asked you to be in that letter; but I was a child when she wrote it—I could do nothing for myself. Now I am a woman, and I can work. Do you think my mother would have liked me to be a burden to you? Do you think I should be happy if I was a burden even to you? You are so generous, Mr. Sagar, that you can understand—no one could understand better than you—how much happier I should be earning my own bread. Don't you feel that I should?" with an appealing look, and laying an appealing hand on his.

"You should think something of the happiness you would give me, Mabel," said Bob, evading an answer. "I don't know anything," he added, with an energy and emphasis that trebled the meaning of the words, "which would make me so happy as to be of use to you."

"Of use to me? Didn't I write to you at once when I heard of our ruin? Didn't I bring you all the way from London? Do you think I shall spare you in future, Mr. Sagar? You'll find I shall give you trouble enough to satisfy even you," she said, with a smile that shone through tears, for she was touched exceedingly, as well she might, by the depth and tenderness of affection shown in Mr. Sagar's manner, more than in his words. Bob, however, still held out against the Quixotic national schoolmistress scheme, and suggested her taking charge of children of Indian parents, of whom he could have procured her half-a-dozen, but Mabel at last coaxed him into a sullen assent to her pet plan.
